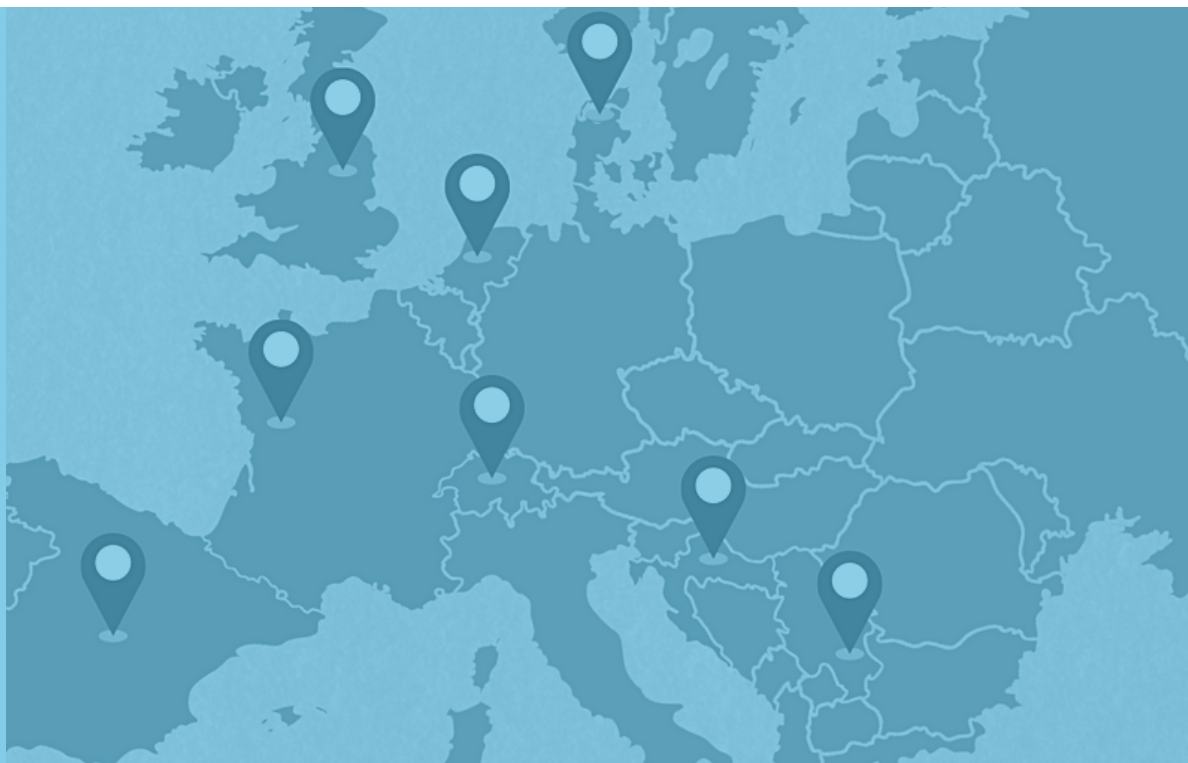


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EUROPEAN INVENTORY
OF CULTURAL VALUES



Culture, politics, and the taxpayer's money

Insights from nine case studies on
online cultural debates in Europe

INVENT REPORT D5.4

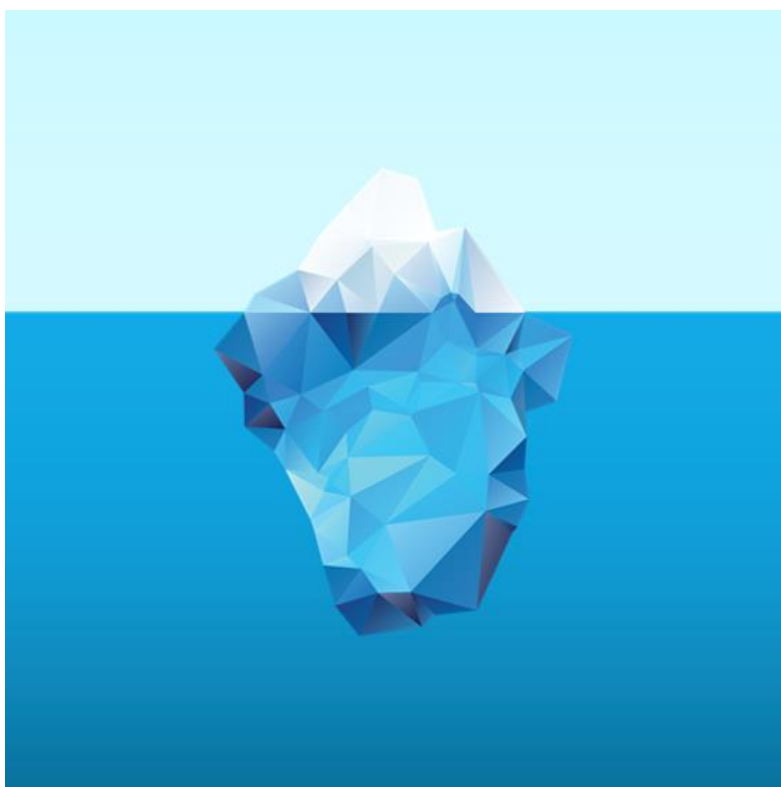
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EUROPEAN INVENTORY OF SOCIETAL VALUES OF CULTURE AS A BASIS FOR INCLUSIVE CULTURAL POLICIES



Deliverable 5.4

Data scraping of online content - Report 3

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Culture, politics, and the taxpayer's money

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INVENT Report D5.4

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Executive Summary

In the INVENT Project, we seek to develop new perspectives and methodologies for comprehensively capturing the societal value of culture, and how social processes of globalization, migration, digitalization, and social inequalities are impacting the transformation of everyday life among European citizens. In this working group, we focus on the role of digital technologies and the internet in providing broader and more democratic access to cultural participation. To do so, we analyse how citizens use social media and engage in online discussions around cultural topics within the public arena in different European countries.

For this third report, each country conducted a case study on a specific cultural issue, thereby aiming to identify the predominant online discourses in relation to each case, to identify the social values related to the INVENT megatrends, and to propose policy recommendations. Cases were selected based on three criteria: their relation to cultural policy, their relation to INVENT's megatrends, and their topicality. In total, we conducted **nine country-specific case studies**. The following topics were covered: discussing tourism on Reddit (Croatia), the implementation of MitID and a digitalised society for (almost) everyone (Denmark), the case of the new flagship library Oodi and reflections on the role of the library in the Nordic welfare state (Finland), the removal of Christian statues from the public space and the battle of collective memories (France), reality programmes and social conflict (Serbia), Bono Cultural Joven (Spain), cultural appropriation on Twitter (Switzerland), and the case of the "Festival of Brexit" AKA "Unboxed" (UK).

We combined **web scraping** techniques with quantitative data analyses and qualitative approaches to gain a better understanding of the issues dominating different discourses. Thus, we scraped posts and comments from Facebook, Twitter, and Reddit and incorporated insights from various news media websites. These textual data were then analysed using **structural topic modelling** and **thematic analysis**.

We have identified several common themes connecting the online debates in the nine INVENT countries. Firstly, a debate on **the value and meaning of culture** emerges, in which the notion of "culture" itself becomes an object of public dispute. This debate highlights disagreements about what constitutes "real" or "appropriate" culture in the eyes of the online public. Another common theme is criticism of the spending of taxpayers' money on culture - **culture and the taxpayer**. In this regard, debates arise about what constitutes "good" culture and whether it should be subsidised accordingly. Finally, the **politicisation of culture** and the intermingling of political and cultural issues are identified in different countries. The cases analysed have transcended the cultural sphere and had political consequences by influencing political conflict or sparking debates that opened a forum for the far-right. Discussions also arise around **INVENT megatrends** such as globalisation, digitalisation, diversity, and inequality. These debates highlight the lack of inclusion of many Europeans in certain cultural offerings or requirements, either because they do not qualify, lack the necessary skills, do not have the financial means, are discriminated against, or simply because voices in the public discourse want them to be excluded.

Based on the results of this phase, various **policy recommendations** can be made. Thus, clear communication between governments and their citizens is crucial when making cultural decisions. Further, diversity, inclusion, equality, and national pride are not values that can be "forced" on citizens through cultural activities and initiatives. Therefore, collaboration with other administrations and policymakers in sectors such as education, tourism, transport, and health is necessary to reconcile tensions in Europe. Finally, it is essential to communicate the importance of cultural practices and to present data and information on the positive outcomes of cultural participation, both at the individual and community levels.

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1. Introduction

1.1. The INVENT Project & Web Scraping

In the INVENT Project "European Inventory of Societal Values of Culture as a Basis for Inclusive Cultural Policies in the Globalizing World," we aim to develop new perspectives and methodologies for capturing culture's more comprehensive societal value and the way social processes of globalization, migration, digitalization, and social inequalities affect the transformation of everyday life among European citizens. In this working group, we focused on the role of digital technologies and the Internet's ability to provide broader, more democratic access to cultural participation – online and offline. Exploring how citizens use social media and how they engage in online discussion around different topics offered us broader insight into the societal value of culture.

The web scraping method allows us to gather data about online communication on social media with a bottom-up approach to better understand digital engagement concerning various cultural issues and new perspectives about concepts of online culture and societal values prevailing in an online arena. Web scraping entails extracting large amounts of data from the Internet using code written in common programming languages (e.g., C/C++, R, Python). By programming a code to retrieve data along clear directives of interest or relevance, web scraping or data scraping presents itself as an unobtrusive and beneficial method for studying various forms of cultural expression, participation, and discourse occurring in its natural and authentic state online, that is, without any interference from a researcher. Utilizing this method's merit, we could extend investigations into digital cultural expression and participation during our first phase of data scraping (Highfield, Harrington, & Bruns, 2013; Agostino, 2018; but see, e.g., MacDowall & de Souza, 2018). In this first phase, conducted in Spring 2021, we assessed what people talk about when they talk about culture online.

1.2. The Focus of Phase III

In the first data scraping report "Talking about culture on Twitter", we conducted a comparative analysis of culture-related topics in nine European countries in 2019 and 2020, exploring what people talk about when they talk about culture online. For the second report, we delved deeper into online debates on culture through an analysis of e-petitions that are related to culture. In the report "Advocating for culture in turbulent times. Online petitions on Facebook before and during Covid-19", we explored the cases that emerged in trending petitions or, in some cases, a new topic that provides a rich portrayal of national controversies regarding globalization, diversity, digitalization, and inequality (INVENT's megatrends).

In the third phase, we used quantitative and qualitative methods to answer the question of the prevalent online discourses regarding the case and how societal values/INVENT's megatrends are addressed in online discussions. We focused on a country-specific case, studying a prominent topic that addressed a specific controversy within the public arena in each country. Most of the cases explored further data that emerged in the previous phase of the data scraping analysis. In order to highlight specific aspects of the selected topic, each country chose a case that appeared in the trending petitions or, in some cases, a new topic attractive for a study, using one or several of the following criteria: (1) the case is explicitly related to cultural policy; (2) the case is related to one, or more, of INVENT's megatrends; (3) the case is a prominent and controversial topic in the country.

In this phase, each country had the opportunity to choose the platform(s) that were most suitable

to scrape data related to its chosen case. Analysing more platforms allowed us to expand our skillset and innovate our method of data-scraping. We assessed posts and comments on Facebook, Twitter, and Reddit. We also incorporated insights from news media websites from The Guardian, Daily Mail, Helsingin Sanomat, and a French online petition platform, mesopinions.fr. This comparative approach offers us a comprehensive understanding of the role of social media and public fora for specific debates and showcases to which extent they can provide an arena for cultural debates online. We identified how European citizens from various social groups discuss, perceive, and understand changes in an everyday culture influenced by megatrends such as inequalities, globalization, and digitalization, and the effects of these changes on inclusiveness, tolerance and social cohesion, and social values in general.

Analysing country-specific case studies based on different social media allows us to reach the opinions of a wider audience across social media. As a part of this report, nine country-specific case studies were analysed: Croatia: Discussing tourism on Reddit; Denmark: The implementation of MitID and a digitalized society for (almost) everyone; Finland: The case of the new flagship library Oodi and reflections on the role of the library in the Nordic welfare state; France: The remotion of Christian statues from the public space and the battle of collective memories; Serbia: Reality programs and social conflict; Spain: Bono Cultural Joven; Switzerland: Cultural appropriation on Twitter; and UK: The case of the "Festival of Brexit" AKA "Unboxed".

1.3. Online Comments on Social Media

Online discussions are one of the main features of social media, a practice that has become available through the architecture of web 2.0, allowing communication to be more complex and communal (O'Reilly, 2005). Social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Twitter, Reddit, etc., have many features encouraging online participation, including posting comments, status updates, sharing photos and videos, ranking, and many more. With these aspects of communications, online participation has become part of everyday life, creating a networked public - an imagined collective shaped by the interaction of people, technology, and practices where boundaries between entertainment and social engagement are blurred (Ito, 2008; Jenkins, 2006). Today, a large amount of internet content is user-generated and posted on prominent social media sites – creating a vast arena for research in the social sciences that use social media data for various purposes.

However, social media sets research agendas differently, not only in terms of the media architecture that shapes communication in specific ways or variations in user demographic but also in the way they are integrated into diverse aspects of everyday life. As one of the most popular social networks, with about 2 578 million¹ active users worldwide at the beginning of 2023, Facebook has become a space for entertainment, self-expression, socializing, information seeking, and civic practices among users. On the other hand, Facebook represents a platform with a much more personal touch where people have a closer network of family and friends where they share opinions and beliefs more usually within the communities congregate around common goals and intentions rather than following celebrities or other opinion leaders.

With significantly fewer monthly active users worldwide, 556 million² in 2023, Twitter is a prominent

¹ <https://www.statista.com/statistics/272014/global-social-networks-ranked-by-number-of-users/>

² <https://www.statista.com/statistics/303681/twitter-users-worldwide/>

medium for users to stay updated on the news and current affairs (Newman et al., 2022). On the other hand, public debate on Twitter can also have a relevant influence on the news media. Although its effect is usually short-term, this platform undoubtedly becomes essential in agenda-setting processes (Su & Borah, 2019). Reddit is less popular compared to other social media drawing around 344 thousand premium users in 2021³. Reddit is a social news, content creation, and discussion platform where registered users post content such as comments in text form, links, picture messages, and videos. Discussions on Reddit are public and visible to everyone. Redditors - registered users, share specific demographic structures: 58% are between 18 and 34 years old and predominantly male (57%) (Proferes et al., 2021). Such Redditors create content, rate it, and organize discussions and topics within message boards called subreddits.

News sites often allow public online comments at the bottom of their news stories, where readers can post their opinions and react to somebody else's opinions and ideas. A large body of research in journalism discusses comments' role and how news organizations view their usefulness (Manosevitch & Tenenboim, 2017), raising the question of their moderation (Gillespie, 2018). For many organizations, commenting on daily topics becomes hard to monitor as many comments contain content that violates guidelines (use of emotionally charged and potentially abusive language). Authors analyzing the corpus of online news comments conclude that comments are "overwhelmingly negative" and contain two elements of attitudes: judgment and appreciation (Cavasso & Taboada, 2021). Another study tried to answer whether online news comments are similar to face-to-face conversations. The results showed that online comments do not have the characteristic of spontaneous conversation but carry an argumentative and evaluative language discourse. Therefore, they are more similar to opinion articles. Other studies have recently explored discourse and the linguistic variation of online news comments and describe it as confrontational, evaluative, and distinctive from other traditional written and spoken registers (Ehret; Taboada, 2020).

1.4. Research Questions

In this phase, we explore cases that provide a detailed study of national controversies regarding globalization, diversity, digitalization, inequality, and societal values of culture using various social media depending on the chosen topic.

To research how people express themselves online regarding the cultural topic selected for each country, the following set of sub-questions has been formulated:

What are the prevalent online discourses regarding the case?

How are societal values/INVENT's megatrends addressed/evaluated in online discussions regarding the case?

What can policy makers learn from the case?

In the following chapters we introduce each country's case study. Case studies will be followed by a discussion, which ties the findings from each report together. We conclude with our recommendations to policy makers based on the third and final stage of the data scraping task force.

³ <https://www.statista.com/topics/5672/reddit/#dossierKeyfigures>

2. Methodology

In this chapter, we will describe the methodological framework of our study. First, we describe our data acquisition and data pre-processing processes, after which we provide a brief introduction to both quantitative and qualitative analysis methods of the data, structural topic modeling (Roberts et al. 2014; Roberts et al. 2016), and thematic analysis (Aronson, 1995; Boyatzis, 1998).

2.1. Data Scraping

To ensure best possible quality of data for analyses in each country, we determined that the best option is to combine global social media platforms and national websites to gather the data sets. To scrape Twitter and Reddit, R scripts were developed and shared. In case of Reddit, no additional API credentials were required, and in case of Twitter, V2 API access with existing academic product track subscription⁴ were utilized to download large amounts of historical tweets. Reddit post were accessed by using R package RedditeXtractor (Rivera 2022) and tweets by R package academictwitteR (Barrie & Ho, 2021). Each country determined themselves, whether Tweets and Reddit posts were sufficient, in terms of both quantity and quality, to be included in the sample. In addition to Twitter and Reddit, various national websites, and newspaper comment sections, were used. These data sources are introduced in more detail in the respective country chapters.

2.2. Data Pre-Processing

Data pre-processing steps, commonly required in computational text analysis, were undertaken in every country following similar steps. Retweets were excluded from the sample. URLs, emojis, special characters, and in case of tweets, mentions, were deleted from the text. Then the texts were lemmatized utilizing R package udpipe (Wijffels 2022), which provides functionality to lemmatize texts in each of the languages used in the report. Udpipes also provides part-of-speech tagging, which were used to filter the data to contain only nouns, adjectives, and proper nouns. Words with less than 3 characters were discarded, as was words that were defined to be “stop words”, words that do not convey substantial meaning (such as and, or, the), or are otherwise unfit to be modelled, for example, the keyword used to gather the data. Finally, both 1) documents containing only one word and 2) words that occur only x times, where x is a number each country saw fit (for example, x=6 in the case of Finland), in the whole pre-processed corpus were discarded.

2.3. Analysis: Structural Topic Modelling

Structural topic modelling (STM) was decided to be a suitable choice to model the data. With STM, as topic modelling in general, the target of the analysis is to find latent topics that describe the prevalent dimensions in discussions present in the data that is modelled. Compared to LDA topic modelling (see e.g. Blei 2011; Dimaggio 2013), STM provides advantages for our research design. With STM not only content of the documents, but also their metadata can be modelled. This can yield better model for the data generating process, if the metadata of the documents has been important for emergence of topics. In our case, we modelled one or two different sources of metadata depending on the specific research design in each country. First source of metadata was the date of the document. We assume that the temporal dimension of prevalence of different topics

⁴ <https://developer.twitter.com/en/products/twitter-api/academic-research>

is important; some topics might be discussed more frequently at some interval of the time frame under the study. Second source, when applicable, was the source platform of the document. We assume that discussion of the phenomenon under analysis might differ depending on the platform the discussion is happening in. For example, tweets are limited in length and do not allow very multidimensional discussion, when in other platforms, longer and more discursive documents may be generated.

2.4. Analysis: Thematic Analysis

After completing the topic modelling analysis, we moved on to a more in-depth, qualitative analysis, using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is a frequent form of qualitative analysis that is often used to decipher large datasets. When conducting thematic analysis, the researcher uses coding in order to detect patterns and recurring themes in the data. This system offers pragmatic tools to navigate large qualitative datasets and facilitate the emergence of meaningful findings (Aronson, 1995; Boyatzis, 1998).

Before conducting the analysis, we first had to choose a sample of comments/tweets/posts to analyze out of the thousands and tens of thousands of comments. We decided that each country will extract its sample based on the topics that emerged. In this manner, at least 20 comments/tweets/posts were chosen for their sample from each topic that emerged in the topic modelling. For example, if a country had seven topics, they extracted 20x7 comments (140 comments overall). In order to not rely too heavily on the topics alone, each team also added a random sample of 20 more comments. Thus, if a country had seven topics, they ended up analyzing 160 comments or more.

After choosing their sample, each country then continued to code the more common themes that emerged from the data leading to the findings that will be introduced in the following chapters. The findings are framed in light of INVENT's mega-trends and interest in societal values.

3. Findings for Croatia: Discussing Tourism on Reddit

3.1. Background

In the third phase of data scraping, the Croatian team focused on analyzing topics related to tourism and tourists. This theme appeared in a few online petitions analyzed in the previous stage of our data scraping project. Although this subject has gone unnoticed in the context of online petitions, it is certainly prominent in public discourse, reflecting discussions about the positive and negative aspects of the more pronounced development of tourism in Croatia. Tourism - the fastest-growing industry that attains almost 5% of the world's economic turnover and employs about 2000 million people (Europac Federation, 2021) has become a leading industry in Croatia. In the European context, the Croatian economy is more dependent on tourism income than its Mediterranean competitors. In Croatia, tourism revenues in 2021 were 15.8 percent of the GDP. Numbers were slightly less than in previous years due to the adverse effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on tourism demand⁵. Even with such reduced revenues from tourism in the two pandemic years, they were still the largest in the European Union - when expressed as a share of GDP⁶.

Over the years, tourism's effects on the economy and broader social processes on the Adriatic coast have become more visible. In this context, we can discuss its positive and negative consequences, from the economy and demography to urban changes. The most significant positive developments are related to economic growth, especially in the coastal counties - which record higher GDP and an increase in the number of employees compared to other counties.

On the other hand, tourism also brings great urban transformation, usually to the detriment of the resident population, and causes great regional and microregional inequalities. In the context of urban transformation, we can talk about a process of apartmentization, i.e., the conversion of residential units into accommodations for tourists, which makes it impossible for the local population to stay in the cores of cities that used to be extremely lively (Petrić et al., 2015). This opens up a question of residents' housing problems and how tourist accommodation, seasonality, and overall vulnerability to tourism influence housing affordability in touristic places (Stojčić, Mikulić, Vizek, 2022).

Alongside that, the process of turistification helps the disappearance of public facilities and the seasonal offer of both public facilities and business opportunities (Petrić et al., 2015). This process is also reflected in the large difference in economic activity in the earnings of entrepreneurs during summer and winter. Namely, it is unprofitable for many to keep shops, restaurants, and other facilities open during the off-season, and city centers are often empty. Locals often do not have grocery stores available at affordable prices (Milivojević, 2019). The impossibility of permanent employment leads to greater de-population and emigration of city centers.

Current societal discussion about tourism in Croatia is prominent on different social media. This work focuses on Reddit, a platform that has become popular among worldwide users. Reddit is a social news aggregation, content rating, and discussion platform where registered users post content such as different comments in text form, links, picture messages, and videos. Demographic about Reddit users

⁵ <https://lidermedia.hr/biznis-i-politika/udio-prihoda-od-turizma-u-bdp-u-u-hrvatskoj-uvjerljivo-najveci-u-europskoj-uniji-142865>

⁶ <https://lidermedia.hr/biznis-i-politika/udio-prihoda-od-turizma-u-bdp-u-u-hrvatskoj-uvjerljivo-najveci-u-europskoj-uniji-142865>

is the information that is not easy to find. However, according to Reddit's site administrators (2021), 58% of users are between 18 and 34 years old and are predominantly male (57%) (Proferes et al., 2021).

This platform contains discussions about different hot topics in the public sphere, reflecting users' opinions. Our analysis focused on tourism and tourists in the Croatian context and vivid discussions on that topic.

3.2. Data description

The comments analyzed in the Croatian case were collected from the social network Reddit. Collecting data from this platform was to examine the online discussion about tourism and tourists in the Croatian context. Discussions on Reddit are public and visible to everyone. Registered users ("Redditors") create content that is rated by other members (Proferes et al., 2021), and content is organized by topics into user-created boards called "subreddits". We collected the data from the subreddit "Croatia" using the keywords "tourism" and "tourists." In this way, we scraped all the posts containing keywords from 2013 to 2022. For data extraction, we used R and scripts created by Ossi Sirkka.

The total number of collected comments was 3 455, and after preparing and cleaning data for the analysis, we selected 2 213 comments for further analysis.

Table HR - 1 - Summary of data gathered in the Croatian case

Platform	N
Reddit	2213

3.3. Analysis - descriptive

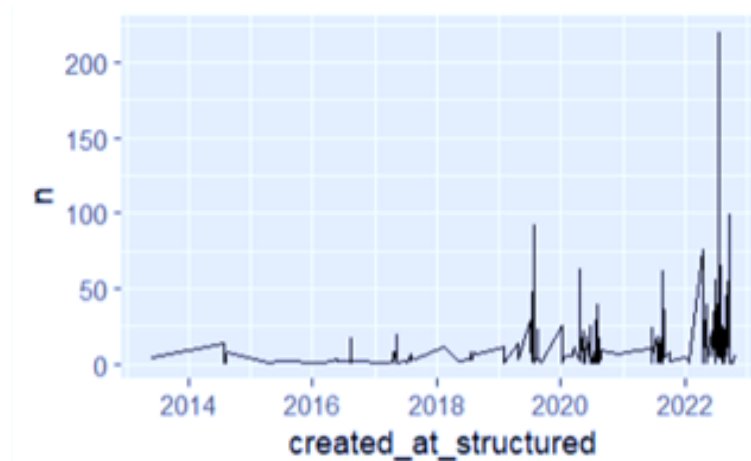
The descriptive analysis takes place after a data-cleaning process. In this step, we removed all the posts containing unrelated topics and used a lemmatization process to prepare Croatian data for text analysis. Table HR - 2 shows the most frequently used words among the posts we collected. This basic descriptive analysis allowed us to identify the general frame of the most discussed topics. In this context, we can see that the most frequently used words in discussions were: "tourism", "man", "year", "price", "tourists", "apartment", "problem", "good", "Croatian" and "city".

Table HR - 2 - Ten most used words in comments

Word [Croatian]	Frequency
Reddit	2213
Tourism [Turizam]	556
Human [Čovjek]	487
Year [Godina]	401
Price [Cijena]	363
Tourists [Turisti]	308
Apartment [Apartman]	260
Problem [Problem]	201
Good [Dobar]	197
Croatian [Hrvatski]	192
City [Grad]	181

The next step in the descriptive analysis was to get more information about the structure of collected comments in our datasets. The results can be seen in two descriptive graphs below. Figure HR - 1 presents the number of comments posted per day throughout the years. Figure HR - 1 presents the cumulative number of documents through the dataset's time frame. We can see that the most significant spikes in discussions about tourism and tourists were in 2022. The results indicate that tourism development in Croatia in the last few years has raised more discussions about tourism's positive and negative aspects among Reddit users.

Figure HR - 1 - Number of comments per day



The last descriptive analysis includes the median and means of words and characters in the comments. Results are presented in Table HR - 3. We can see that the average words used in the comments were 17,33 words per comment, and the median was 10 words per comment.

Table HR - 3 - Descriptive analysis of comments' length

Label	Value
Mean characters	122,67
Mean words	17,33
Median characters	72
Median words	10

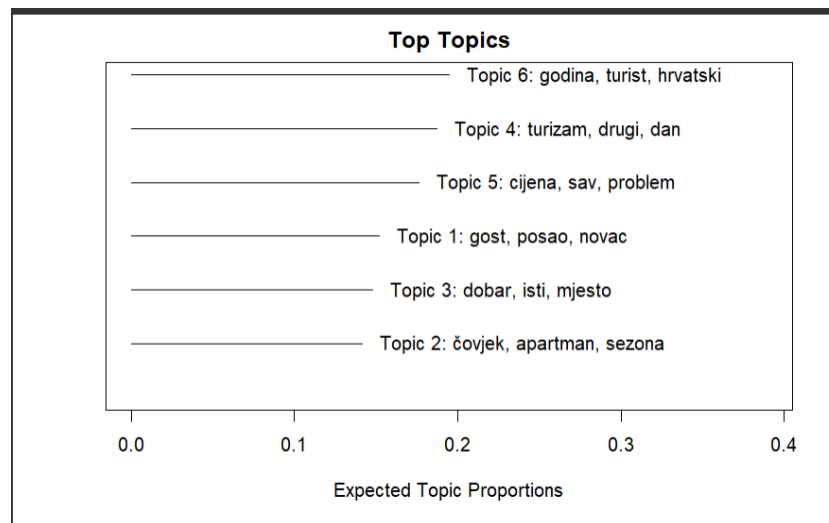
3.4. Topic modelling

Topic modelling allows us to discover abstract topics that occur in collected posts. We select the model with six topics as the most suitable solution for interpretation based on the several topic model results that yield different numbers of topics. Description of the topics, including the title and five most relevant words for each topic, are presented in Table HR - 4.

Table HR - 4 - Topic Modelling Results

Topic 1: Tourist offer		Topic 2: Season on the coast		Topic 3: Local issues	
Croatian	English	Croatian	English	Croatian	English
Gost	Guest	Čovjek	Human	Dobar	Good
Posao	Job	Apartman	Apartment	Isti	Same
Novac	Money	Sezona	Season	Mjesto	Place
Jeftin	Cheap	Obala	Coast	Voda	Water
Kraj	End	Radnik	Worker	Naplata	Payment
Topic 4: Domestic tourists		Topic 5: High prices		Topic 6: Comparison to other touristic destinations	
Croatian	English	Croatian	English	Croatian	English
Turizam	Tourism	Cijena	Price	Godina	Year
Drugi	Other	Problem	Problem	Turist	Tourist
Dan	Day	Grad	Town	Hrvatski	Croatian
Zemlja	Country	Restoran	Restaurant	More	Sea
Vrijeme	Weather	Novi	New	Euro	Euro

Figure HR - 2 - Number of comments per day



Six topics on Reddit reflect discussion about: tourist offers, characteristics of the season on the coast, local issues, domestic tourists, high prices, and comparison to other touristic countries. More detailed analysis and insight into the comments showed that we could group the topics into categories highlighting the positive and negative aspects of tourism in Croatia.

Topics about tourist offers and comparison to other touristic destinations primarily reflect discussion about the lack of tourist offers and cultural events on the coast and comparison of touristic offers between Croatia and other destinations. They mostly compare what a person can gain for the same money in different places.

The topic about the season on the coast mainly contains post that describes what the season looks like and how people are making money during this period. Connected with this topic is the topic concerning the high prices of apartments for domestic tourists and their experience with this.

Topic about local issues reflects discussion related to problems that local communities have during the season due to high tourist activities in the local communities. Most often, users state problems with limited infrastructure that cannot adequately respond to the load caused by mass tourism.

3.5. Thematic Analysis

After the quantitative text analysis, we did a qualitative thematic analysis of selected posts. The top 50 comments for each of the six topics were selected in the sample, together with additional 20 randomly selected comments. In total, we analyzed 320 posts in the qualitative analysis.

In the following analysis, we outline the key elements of each topical debate in the six areas that refer to tourism and economic development, the value of money, local problems, environmental issues, expensive summer vacations for domestic tourists, and regional antagonism.

Tourism and economic development

Users discussed tourism as the fastest-growing industry in Croatia and its positive and negative effects. In this context, users recognize tourism as a key economic factor the Croatian economy relies on most. They point out the importance of tourism in terms of economic benefits. Also, prioritizing

tourism over other economic sectors that are left behind identify as a problem. The following examples illustrate the tensions between the idea that tourism is the most important sector for economic growth and the striking negative effects this policy has on other branches.

"Entrepreneurs who work in tourism, either as hoteliers, owners of restaurants, cafes, bars, shops, bakeries, transporters, renters... pay the Croatian tax and all kinds of levies. This makes up 20% of the GDP.For example, Croatian winemakers and olive growers sell almost all their products on the domestic market because we do not have the space to plant large plantations to export. Iločki cellars make money from Croatian tourism by selling their wines on the coast. The whole country lives on tourism. Another thing is that we should depend less on tourism. We need to work on that. The third thing is that we have to reduce illegal work and punish the devastation of the coast. The fourth thing is that we must reform the public administration and change the labor law in order to be able to reduce taxes and levies for employers and increase wages for workers."

"Part of the reason why life is a banana for the average Croatian citizen is precise because most of our funds come from tourism.... a government that depends on an activity on which the people do not have much influence is inherently flawed because it does not depend on the people - the voters, ergo they don't give a damn about the people."

*They do not give a f**k for the people because they do not have to keep them productive and happy; they do not provide most of the resources anyway.*

To conclude, tourism is a great supplement, but directly (through taxes, bureaucracy, and the state) and indirectly (low wages in tourism, no income taxation...) destroy the development of other branches, such as industry.

The result - emigration of the young and productive, privatization of public goods, rising prices and a decrease in purchasing power, stagnation in the development of the state, real estate, the rich getting richer, the poor getting poorer."

Value of the money

The dominant theme in this framework is profit-driven motives for tourist activities among tourist hosts. The discussion has become more prominent on Reddit over the past few years. These comments focus on how to make quick profit by renting apartments and how prices are determined in private accommodations.

"Pure supply and demand. Look at Booking or Airbnb; everything is booked for almost the whole summer. As long as it is sold, the price is good..."

"Only the number is important. The bigger, the better... And the weather is important. They always spend more when it is hot. When it gets cold, they withdraw as if depressed. Or when it rains.... everyone goes to Plodine and Lidl and back to the apartments".

"A lovely Czech family used to come to my place every year for many years. I adjusted the prices yearly because that is what the market dictates, and I am not a fool to invest my money in my grandfather's property and not get it back. ... This year, I painted the walls so that the moisture spots are not visible and added a second bedroom upstairs in the hall, so it is now a tiny apartment for a family. Of course, I again adjust the prices following the investment. ... if they think they will come next year, they must pay a deposit for the right to make a reservation. The tavern will be

converted into two apartments by then, so the five of them can choose what to book”.

“Supply-demand. I charge realistically and am fully booked until the end of September. My conclusion is that I underestimated my apartment and the financial power of potential guests, so next year, I will increase the prices. Admittedly, this is my first year renting, and the apartment is top-notch; the only thing is that it is in a relatively unknown location”.

“If his apartment is booked at a higher price, why not. You would also sell something of yours for a double price if you have a buyer. If there are no buyers, the price will be lower”.

“... Rude and greedy, and still full. Vacation at sea is not a necessity; it is a luxury. If people are willing to pay 200 euros, they will raise it to 210, 220. And even then, it will be full. We get that money from tourists and invest in Croatia; it doesn't matter if it's illegal or not.”

Local problems

The spike in tourism in Croatia is putting additional pressure on the coastal cities and local communities that host tourists during the summer. Users often reveal that many visible and less viable costs affect their quality of life during that period. Most commune problems are: inadequate local infrastructure to manage increasing tourism loads, crowds, noise, lack of parking space, and other problems. Users often noted that more attention should be paid to the needs of local people in tourism-driven places.

One of the most emerging topics they discuss is the housing problem - how tourist accommodation, seasonality, and overall vulnerability to tourism influence housing affordability in these emerging popular touristic places. Users noted that hosts transform long-term rentals previously used by residents to short-term rentals for tourists, decreasing an already short housing supply and uplifting the market prices.

*“You cannot find an apartment for long-term rent in Šibenik. Go online and see what is offered, sadness and grief. Then go to Airbnb and Booking, and poof, 800 apartments and cabins are available for 60 euros per day. Then they say that no one lives in the center, shops are closed, and nothing works. How will it work when people have no place to live? F**k them and their apartment building.”*

“Negative effects? Slow mobile networks due to the high density of people for which the current infrastructure does not have the capacity... excessive tourism that leads to suffocation of the quality of life of the local population, ..., plus noise and extreme working conditions for local workers, as well as the overcrowded beaches - too much dependence of the local economy on tourism, many new businesses rely and open exclusively on that basis, queues and lack of supply in shops, ... traffic collapse in city centers, and 70-90% of apartments are empty in winter - there is also unplanned construction, luxurious informal settlements - extreme lack of parking spaces ...”

“Tourists are not the problem. The problem is that the hosts don't know how to set the rules because money has blinded us. I am writing in the first person plural even though I am not in tourism...all over the world, in tourist destinations where it is necessary, the number of guests per hour/day is limited. It is our fault if we cannot arrange infrastructures for waste disposal, wastewater, etc. We have ourselves to blame for moving into basements in order to give our apartments to tourists. We have ourselves to blame for all the illegally built buildings because we turn our heads

away from it and do not vote. A tourist can throw a garbage bag in the air, so it's not our fault, but it's undoubtedly our fault that we didn't offer them a container on a famous" beach.

Environments issues

The negative environmental impact of tourism is not a prominent topic among Reddit discussants, but this issue has been appearing through various topics. Users demonstrated that tourism drove up energy usage, mobile data traffic, and waste generation at the expense of local people. In this context, users discuss the over-consumption of natural resources, especially beaches and coastline areas.

"It hurts me to see what is left of our sea. Because of tourists, many natural beaches are strewn with pebbles and sand. ... they destroy everything to make a beach and built a beach bar and apartments from which you can dip your feet in the sea from the balcony. So let us kill everything that lives in that habitat... Our sea is lifeless and full of garbage due to the number of ships, feces, and chemicals released. Anyone who fishes (non-commercially) knows that the catch in recent years has been miserable, and it's better not to talk about commercial fishermen. If you want to go further, I advise diving and seeing that sadness and what lies below sea level.

"They leave all 3-4 air conditioners running for 5-6 hours while they are at the beach... Of course, they left them running; they did not want to return to the hot apartment. I invested in better thermal insulation, so there will be less consumption to maintain the temperature".

Pricey summer vacations for domestic tourists

Much discussion was taken around summer accommodation prices for domestic tourists. The central notion is that summer holidays on the Adriatic coast have become a luxury for people from other parts of Croatia. Users point out that tourist destinations like Greece, Turkey, and Egypt are much cheaper than the Adriatic coast. The reasons for finding other vacation destinations were the high prices of the apartment rents, dissatisfaction with restaurant service, and feeling they were not welcome. This tension between Reddit users who are tourist hosts and those who are tourists is described in the following examples.

"The fact that the prices are high by Croatian standards is irrelevant because the landlord's goal is not to satisfy Croats by providing them with affordable vacations. The apartment is the same, but this year there are more tourists = the demand is higher = the price is increasing."

"Unfortunately, it is cheaper to go to Greece, for example, Cyprus, by plane for a few tens of euros. It is even less crowded, whit natural sand beaches, and you are in a hotel, not at grandma's apartment. It was cheaper for me to go to Portugal than to a cottage. Only the highway there and then fuels plus the toll costs a few hundred euros. Prices will come to their level; no one has to pay a premium for squid in palm oil in Novi Vinodolski. If you do not want to..."

"Croats in their own country have not been a target audience for a long time, and now it will be even less."

"Going on a summer vacation is a luxury. Hosts know this and take advantage of it. Not only are the prices unaffordable for domestic tourists (which renters do not care about), but they are not worth the money, which is why there are alternatives from

other countries. What worries me more is the inflated price of apartments for long-term rent. It is an expense you cannot easily avoid. But damn, if you had an apartment and I had one, we would not care about these things."

Regional antagonism

Tourism positively affects the economic situation, especially in the coastal counties compared to the continental region, with the higher number of employees and the highest GDP growth in the country. This effect causes regional and micro-regional inequalities, and Reddit users often debate about it. Discussion within this theme reflects regional tensions between Reddit users from Adriatic and Continental Croatia, often using well-known regional stereotypes.

"Great, my family has been in tourism for generations, while you in Zagorje still had to translate the meaning of that word.....Reduce envy and regional animosity, and you can observe things more normally and objectively. I saw the scum in our tourism as much as you want, but I also met excellent and hardworking people and tourist workers. If anything, it would not be fair to generalize and wish for tourism to collapse. That would not be wise for you in the North, considering that your industry and production are minor even in our terms" .

"Tourism has no opposing sides. There are negative sides for those not smart enough to invest in an apartment in time. The only negative effect is the jealousy of those who do not get a penny from tourism, and then we renters are expected to give all the profit to the state and indirectly to you parasites, right?"

"People live from renting apartments. Since you are a local guest, you will also use air conditioning, water, and other things, and in the end, you will leave less money. Everything revolves around tourism, construction, cafes, offices, an industry that still survives, and other business matters. In the same way, prices are higher for us, especially bread, which is more expensive along the coast than, say, in Trilj (Dalmatian Zagora). In addition, we live better, but Dalmatia as a region earns more money than the rest. Or Istria. It doesn't matter. Some of us do not live from renting an apartment; it is not easy because the standard of living is too high. Living under HRK 10,000 is not worth it here; I know because I plan to live with a girlfriend. And, to pay rent for a decent apartment, not 20-year-old shabby furniture..."

3.7. Discussion and conclusions

This case study aimed to shed light on the dominant debates around tourism in Croatia, analyzing related posts from Reddit. We chose this platform because it contained many discussions about tourism and tourists in Croatia. Also, we do not know much about Reddit demographic in the Croatian context – other research shows that the users are mostly young and middle-aged men (Proferes et al., 2021). Analyzing the subreddit "Croatia", we collect user comments from different regions. Regional affiliation is identified based on people's communication dialects or self-identification. This notion gave us an interesting insight into diverse regional perspectives on the topics. In the report, we focus on the three research topics that we posed for the final phase of the task force: (1) prevailing online discourses related to the case; (2) how the case study covers societal values and INVENT's mega-trends; (3) insights and recommendations for policymakers.

Qualitative thematic analysis reveals that the prevailing online discussion concerns tourism's positive and negative aspects. The most significant positive effect is related to the favorable

economic situation, especially in coastal counties. In this context, some users pointed out economic profit as an essential value and supported the current tourist developmental strategy; they were primarily renters satisfied with personal earnings from tourism-driven activities. On the other hand, some of the users were more concerned with negative aspects of tourism in terms of urban transformation, detriment of the resident population, local problems with infrastructure and housing, and exploitation of natural resources - processes that cause greater microregional inequalities and a lower quality of life for the local population.

Results from this case study cover different societal values and INVENT's mega-trends in the context of micro-regional inequalities – reflect on tensions between Continental and Adriatic Reddit users, between the ones who have benefited from tourism (apartment owners, entrepreneurs in tourism) and others who do not have benefits from it, and between renters and domestic tourists. General discourse about tourism and its consequences, is tension between value for the money and the profit and getting along with massive tourism vs. value for the local community and more sustainable tourism. The result of this analysis opens up several topics about microregional inequalities and policy recommendations that can be considered account; economic sustainability, maintaining and improving the quality of life of local communities, including social structures and access to resources, giving the voice to local communities and their involvement in planning and decision-making on the management and future development of tourism in their area, in cooperation with other stakeholders, supporting the preservation cultural and natural heritage, and reducing environmental issues.

4. Findings for Denmark: The implementation of MitID and a digitalized society for (almost) everyone

4.1. Background

In the third data scraping phase of the INVENT project and in reliance on the findings from the second phase (e-petitions), the Danish team focused on the topic of digitalization and the implementation of the new Danish digital citizen identity, MitID. In Denmark, a digital identity is required to access a variety of public services (online), among them some cultural services, and it is used for authentication and identification purposes.⁷ This digital identity is tied to one's citizen number (similar to a social security number) and not only available to those individuals with a Danish nationality, but also issued upon receiving residency in the country. The digital ID can be accessed via an app on one's smartphone or tablet, and users have a personal password and/or can identify themselves through facial recognition software or their fingerprints. They also have the option to use other electronic devices to confirm their identity (e.g., an audio code reader for users with impaired vision).⁸

In 2022, MitID (English: MyID) replaced Denmark's previous digital identity solution, NemID (EasyID), which had been in use since 2010. This change was first announced in 2017, and during the following five years, the implementation process was riddled with delays, not least due to technical difficulties and gaps in the new app's security. Not only have MitID itself, its provider Nets, and the Danish government (spearheaded by the Danish Agency for Digitization and Finance) received a lot of criticism and faced public backlash in this process. The discussions surrounding MitID have also sparked (or: re-ignited) a broader public debate on digitalization in Danish society.

For a long time, Denmark has been on the forefront of digital development in Europe and has unarguably profited from these developments both on the national and international level. In 2021, the country became EU's Digital Champion as evaluated through the European Commission's annual Digital Economy and Society Index (DESI), which involves assessments of, among other things, human capital, connectivity, integration of digital technology, and digital public services⁹. Even though Danish citizens' digital skills are higher than the European average, critical voices question the implications of the advanced level of digitalization for Danes' everyday life, especially for a citizenry that may not be suitably equipped to keep pace with these developments. That applies particularly to those members of Danish society that for various reasons are left behind by digitalization and, as a result, are excluded from public services or face challenges regarding access to their own finances. Such criticism speaks to the scholarly debates about first, second, and third level digital divides, that is, divides in citizens' access to the internet, their skills in using the internet for various purposes, and the tangible outcomes of such digital divides in terms of people's opportunities for getting ahead in life (Van Dijk, 2020). Van Deursen and Helsper (2015, p. 30), for example, show that "the internet remains more beneficial for those with higher social status, not in terms of how extensively they use the technology but in what they achieve as a result of this use for several important domains." In Denmark, a growing reliance on external (foreign) service providers

⁷ <https://lifeindenmark.borger.dk/apps-and-digital-services/mitid> (February 2, 2023)

⁸ <https://www.mitid.dk/en-gb/?language=en-gb> (February 2, 2023)

⁹ <https://en.digst.dk/news/news-archive/2021/november/denmark-is-the-eu-s-digital-champion-in-new-survey/> (February 3, 2023)

for digital governing is further met with scepticism regarding security issues and unduly interference with individual rights and data protection.

The case of the implementation of MitID in Denmark thus taps into the broader objective of the INVENT project of studying how European citizens perceive and understand changes influenced by the introduction of information technologies; how they express themselves online about these changes, and how such digital transformation may potentially add to rising social inequalities, especially for societal groups with less digital access and fewer skills. In this data scraping phase, the Danish team aimed to unpack the public discourses about MitID by considering comments and posts from Twitter and Facebook. In reliance on topic modelling and thematic analysis, we investigated how social media users in Denmark discussed the MitID launch, which problems and challenges were addressed, and how these relate to broader debates on digitalization.

4.2. Data sources

For our investigation into the discourse on digitalization in Denmark and the implementation of MitID, we rely on data from Twitter and Facebook. Considering the high internet penetration rate in Denmark, it is not surprising that a large share of the Danish population has at least one profile on a social media platform. This also includes citizens over the age of 71, of which only 32% are not represented on Facebook or other social media, and 38% use such platforms on a daily basis (Slots- og Kulturstyrelsen, 2022). Facebook continues to be the most important social media platform in Denmark (Newman et al., 2022), and it is particularly popular among elderly Danes.

In contrast, the use of Twitter is less widespread; 20% of Danish social media users have a profile on the platform. Twitter mostly attracts Danes between the age of 35 and 54 years, and 65% of its users in Denmark are male – which constitutes the third largest gender difference for users of any social media platform after Pinterest (76% female users) and Reddit (83% male users; Slots- og Kulturstyrelsen, 2022). While not as frequently used by the general population, Twitter is an important medium for Danish journalists, and users often access it to stay up to date on the news and current developments (Newman et al., 2022; Twitter News, 2022). Public debate on Twitter can have a relevant (albeit short-termed) influence on the news media as well, making the platform important in agenda-setting processes (Su & Borah, 2019). As such, we consider it a useful addition to the analysis of posts published on Facebook, even though social aspects (e.g., staying in touch with family/friends, or up-to date on one's community) are of lesser importance to users of the microblogging site than those of Facebook. Including both social media into our investigation allows us to draw inferences about the dominant topics on each platform in relation to the MitID implementation, and to compare the role of each in broader debates about digitalization in Danish society.

Figure DK - 1 - First post on the announcement of the MitID implementation, March 2017



"So it's official: NemID becomes MitID.
The name is here now – the solution
comes later. Welcome MitID"
<https://twitter.com/larsfrelle/status/844467146205908993>

4.3. Data collection and preliminary analysis

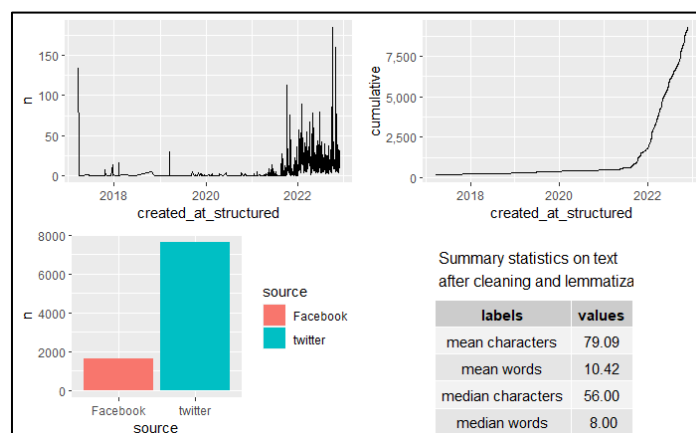
The first tweet on MitID was sent on March 22, 2017, by then-director of the Danish Agency for Digitalization, Lars Frelle-Petersen, announcing that it was official: NemID would become MitID (see Figure DK - 1). Based on this first tweet, we determined the relevant time period for data scraping, starting March 22, 2017, and ending November 28, 2022 (i.e., the conclusion of the data collection period for this phase). Using the `academictwitter` package on R, we scraped all tweets using the keyword or hashtag `mitid/#mitid` for the assigned period, excluding retweets and collecting only tweets in Danish. A total of 10,094 tweets were gathered from Twitter. To collect posts from Facebook, we used Meta's Crowdtangle platform, applied the same search criteria for the hashtag/keyword search "MitID", and adapted the time frame and language, excluding branded content and only collecting results from pages primarily based in Denmark. This strategy resulted in 1,762 posts, a notably smaller number than collected from Twitter; however, Crowdtangle only grants access to official and public pages on Facebook and does not allow for scraping of personal profiles. We return to this sampling bias for the different platforms below.

In the next step, we joined the data for analyses and undertook some additional cleaning steps (unifying date formats, removing URLs/emojis, deleting additional retweets that had remained in the data) before lemmatization. Our final sample consists of 1,762 Facebook posts and 8,582 tweets. The overview in the upper left panel in Figure DK - 2 shows the relevance of the topic over time, with a high initial interest when the implementation of MitID was announced in 2017 and a sharp increase in the number of posts and tweets at the end of 2021 (i.e., when the app's actual launch was imminent). Post volume remained high until the end of the data collection period in November 2022.

Before simultaneously analysing the text corpus from both sources in the topic modelling phase, we provide an overview of the most common words for each platform (Figure DK - 3). Users on Twitter and Facebook used very similar terms to discuss the MitID implementation, frequently referring to "borgerservice" (citizen service), "bruge" (use), "bank", and "pas" (passport).

Some notable differences exist: On Twitter, posts much more often include hashtags, such as references to `#dkpol` (political topics in Denmark), and users directly address or respond to `@DigstDK`, the official Twitter handle of the Danish Agency of Digitalization. In contrast, conversations on Facebook center around "hjælp[e]" ([to] help) and information ("oplysninger"). In general, however, there is a large overlap regarding the most common words.

Figure DK - 2 - Descriptive overview of posting volume over time (top left: total; top right: cumulative), data source for posts (bottom left), and text summary statistics (bottom right).



[illegible]

Six different topics were extracted from the combined data based on exclusivity and semantic coherence scores, and the topic modelling analysis ranked each post or comment according to how closely it is associated with these topics. While higher scores indicate a higher probability that a text belongs to a respective topic, posts can be closely associated with more than one topic. Even though this was not the case in our data on the MitID implementation, we do find that certain topics share common characteristics, which makes it difficult to separate discussions on one issue from others (see further below). Figure DK - 4 provides an overview of the importance of each topic over time, highlighting that, e.g., issues of data security (top center) remained very high on the agenda throughout the whole period under investigation, accounting for up to 35% of all discussion content on Facebook and Twitter in the middle of 2018. In contrast, name puns (bottom center) were particularly popular after the first announcements of MitID in 2017, but quickly became less fashionable, before experiencing a revival in 2022.

Figure 1 displays six line plots showing the proportion of different topics over time (dayseq) from 2018 to 2022. The y-axis represents the proportion, ranging from 0.0 to 0.4. The x-axis represents dayseq, with major ticks for 2018, 2020, and 2022. Each plot shows a solid line for the observed proportion and dashed lines for the confidence interval. A horizontal grey line at 0.15 indicates the baseline proportion.

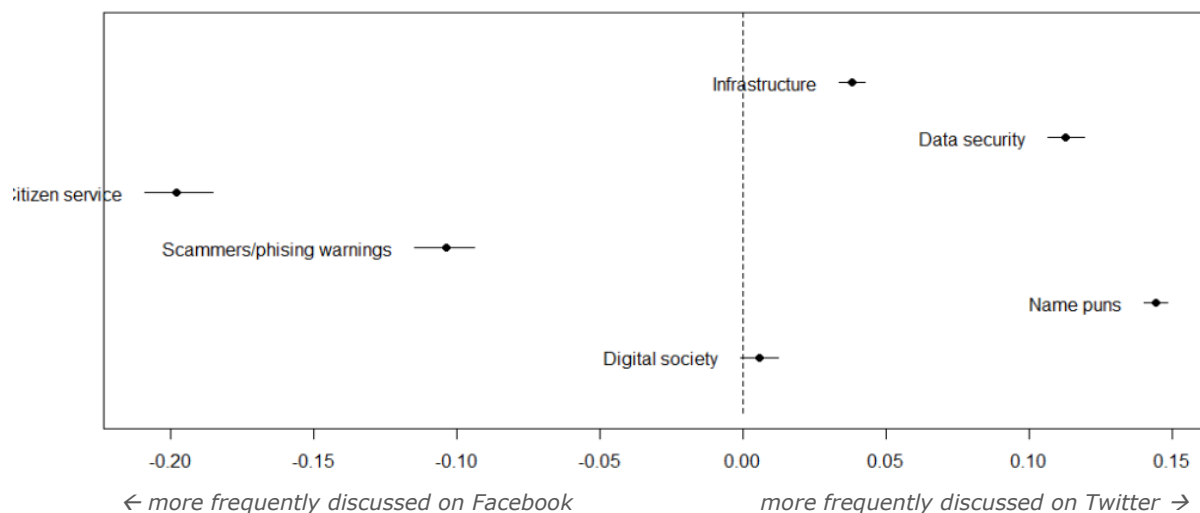
- Infrastructure:** The proportion starts around 0.08 in 2018, rises to a peak of about 0.15 in 2020, and then fluctuates around 0.12 by 2022.
- Data security:** The proportion starts around 0.3 in 2018, peaks at about 0.4 in 2019, and then declines to around 0.25 by 2022.
- Citizen service:** The proportion starts around 0.05 in 2018, rises to about 0.15 in 2020, and then peaks sharply at about 0.25 in 2022.
- Scammers/phishing warnings:** The proportion starts around 0.1 in 2018, rises to about 0.18 in 2019, and then declines to around 0.12 by 2022.
- Name puns:** The proportion starts around 0.4 in 2018, declines to about 0.2 in 2019, and then rises to about 0.28 in 2022.
- Digital society:** The proportion starts around 0.1 in 2018, rises to about 0.18 in 2019, and then declines to around 0.12 by 2022.

Legend:

- Infrastructure (Red dashed line)
- Data security (Yellow dashed line)
- Citizen service (Green dashed line)
- Scammers/phishing warnings (Cyan dashed line)
- Name puns (Blue dashed line)
- Digital society (Pink dashed line)

Lastly, Figure DK - 5 highlights that the six topics were not equally popular on both platforms: While information from citizen service centres and warnings about scammers or phishing attempts were much more prevalent on Facebook, posts about name puns and discussions on data security could be found almost exclusively on Twitter. Reflections on the larger aspects of digital society were the only texts that, to some extent, were shared equally among users in both social media networks. We thus see that there may not only be significant differences in the respective user profiles of each platform, but that they are also used for different deliberative purposes. One important point to keep in mind in this context is the sheer amount of text that can be communicated via Facebook, while Tweets are still limited to 280 characters per post – the platform is termed a ‘micro-blogging’ service and used accordingly. In addition, we mentioned that content on Facebook was collected using Meta’s Crowdtangle service, which only gives access to public pages and groups and introduces a respective bias to the data. Nevertheless, it is interesting to note that Twitter and Facebook not only differ with regard to how something is communicated, but also what is communicated – in this case, entire sub-

Figure DK - 5 - Platform differences and topic prevalence



topics of a larger national debate.

4.5. Thematic analysis

In the next step, the top 50 texts for each of the six topics (i.e., the posts most closely associated with each topic) were selected for thematic analysis. When reading through the texts, we manually deleted posts that were unrelated to MitID or only briefly mentioned the keyword in a different context (e.g., “Use your MitID to log into...”). Similarly, we excluded posts that appeared more than once within a topic (e.g., reposts, copy/paste content in different Facebook groups). In total, 300 posts were assessed in the qualitative analysis, and the initial six topics identified in the topic modelling phase served as guideposts for the interpretation. The topic labels were assigned during this analysis phase. In the following, we outline the key elements of each topical debate in the six areas.

Infrastructure

Discussions in the (technical/digital) infrastructure frame were present on both platforms and remained

relatively rare throughout the investigative period. Most frequently, users referred to a specific clause in the initial announcement/draft of the legal order with which MitID was introduced, which stated that ‘public authorities’ would have the right to suspend individual citizens’ MitID account. Notably, users pointed out that these ‘authorities’ were not clearly defined, which could potentially pave the way for undue interferences with an individuals’ access to their finances and other services. In some instances, these discussions turned into larger debates on the unruly influence of the state in citizens’ life and basic freedom rights, as the following excerpt exemplifies:

*“How can we as citizens ensure that the state/authorities/power does not close our access to our own money, as Trudeau did with the trucks in Canada? [...] you have completely relinquished control over your personal information! [...] Have we as citizens of this country been asked to give our opinion on these radical changes? No, we have not. So why haven’t we been asked? Because they do not give a f*** about our opinion! Danish politicians decided way back in 2018 under the Lars Løkke government that Denmark and the Danes must access the 4th Industrial Revolution, and this implies, among many other things, that we conform to the extreme digitization, and thus both the control and monitoring that comes with it.” (Facebook, October 2022)¹⁰*

Posts in the ‘infrastructure’ topic also include conspiracy theories, references to Covid19 and vaccine passports, accusations that Danish politicians are influenced by the World Economic Forum, and that digitalization would lead into a futuristic surveillance society where citizens are controlled by the government. Lastly, posts in this category addressed issues of technical infrastructure, as visually impaired citizens were not able to use the MitID app because no supporting devices/readers were available in the early stages of the launch.

Data security

In some posts within the ‘data security’ cluster, users hint at Chinese interference in government relations in Denmark, and they often refer to the lack of secure verification on the MitID app: “The only problem MitID has that NemID does not have is how easy it is to hack the system” (Twitter, February 2022). There are also announcements relating to the initial tender process for the provider of the NemID replacement. However, to a large extent, the posts in this topic coincide with those from the infrastructure category, specifically regarding accusations of government and/or financial control, totalitarianism, and a lack of legal protection for citizens: “And after 5 years with MitID, it must again be tendered and becomes DitID [YourID] until it is all put under state control again under the name VoresID [OurID], where the citizen eventually loses the last vestige of privacy and control over his digital identity” (Twitter, December 2017). Aside from discussions on the verification procedure, it is therefore difficult to determine how the topics of infrastructure and data security can be separated in a meaningful way, although the latter is more often addressed on Twitter as opposed to Facebook and was high on the agenda for most of the period under investigation. Nevertheless, the overlap in both topics showcases the strength of a combined quantitative and qualitative approach in the analysis of public debates on social media.

¹⁰ All posts and comments were translated from Danish to English; in some instances, the texts were shortened to highlight specific aspects of the content.

Citizen service

This topic can almost exclusively be found on Facebook, and the posts in this category are distinct from other content in the data. They are published by citizen service centers (“borgerservice”) or public libraries (which often share locations) across the country, where Danes can receive practical help and counselling on a number of administrative aspects of daily life, including, for example, applications for passports or access to childcare support. Citizen service centers are located on the municipality level and operated by public servants. When MitID was officially launched, many of these centers and libraries extended their opening hours or implemented specific ‘MitID’ days for Danes who had trouble with installing or running the new app. Many of these offers were specifically directed at elderly citizens, and the posts in this topic often sound like the example below, indicating that they were coordinated across facilities and/or copy/pasted from previous posts in other groups.

“Do you need to switch from NemID to MitID? 🤖 Borgerservice will be exceptionally open on Saturday 21 May, Friday 27 May and Saturday 28 May. You will likely experience waiting times, as many citizens have not yet switched to MitID. We try to keep the waiting time to a minimum, and you can help with that by remembering to bring: - your smartphone, if you have one – remember to download the MitID app. – valid passport or driver’s license [...] Please note that the opening hours are different 🕒 See you in Citizen Service 🙌” (Facebook, May 2022)

Rather than showcasing public discussion of MitID among citizens, this topic is thus characterized by service information and (strategic) communication from authorities.

Scammers/phishing warning

Posts warning Danish social media users about scamming or phishing attempts (i.e., criminal activities aimed at acquiring a person’s [digital] identity for financial gains) were also common on Facebook, but hardly shared via Twitter. Public authorities or the police used the platform to inform citizens about fraudsters, to share advice on how to avoid them and what to look out for, and to distribute informational material (e.g., a short online quiz on how to spot fake SMS or emails). Again, this category included many duplicate postings, e.g., from different regional police stations across the country or over time. The posts were often only indirectly linked to MitID, for example when warning elderly people not to share their MitID username over the phone. Yet specific cases also exist where fraudsters claimed to help people with the transition from NemID to MitID, and users were prompted to access fake website and share their login information. In some instances, the Danish authorities specifically asked family members to talk to their elder relatives about these cases: *“YOU CAN HELP...JUST BY TALKING ABOUT IT. Tell the elderly that they should never give out personal information over the phone, such as account, NEMID/MitID or CPR information. And if they suspect something fishy, they just have to hang up - without explanation or a goodbye. It's ok to be rude!”* (Facebook, October 2022). The relevance of this topic showcases the vulnerability of specific population groups that did not grow up with digital technology or did not have the opportunity to acquire sufficient literacy skills, thus confirming that the second level of digital divides (digital skills) continues to be clearly related to age (e.g., Hargittai, 2002).

Name puns

True to its digital ‘self’, Twitter was the platform through which users shared jokes and satirical content

about MitID. From the early announcement of the name in 2017, social media users in Denmark made fun about it (MitID – MyID): “*Brugte du dit MitID?*” – “*Mit MitID?*” – “*Ja, dit MitID? #ditmitmitdit*” (Twitter, March 2017). They also commented on the costs of the ‘rebranding’: “Just read that a name change and logo for #mitID costs NOK 300,000. Here’s a free logo - so the expenses will only be NOK 299,999” (Twitter, March 2017). The Danish public service radio station DR P3 even made a satirical video¹¹ about the name, joking about the confusion in MitID (MyID) and MitId (MyIdea). Over time, such puns were published less frequently, but when MitID was finally launched, some satirical posts reappeared, mostly related to users’ frustration regarding the app’s functionality (see Figure 4).

Digital society

Lastly, the topic ‘digital society’ captures posts that discuss how the MitID implementation relates to larger areas of living, societal problems, and digitalization in Denmark. Examples include content on the admission of Ukrainian refugees and their access to work, housing, and public services in general: Without a citizen number and digital identity, many administrative processes were significantly delayed and further aggravated the situation of individuals who were already faced with many challenges. Posts in this topic also highlight the work of volunteers who helped others in overcoming technical barriers in the activation and use of the new app (e.g., in libraries and community centers). While not commonly discussed throughout the whole data collection period, this topic slightly spiked during the election campaign for the Danish Parliament (Folketinget) in the fall of 2022. When published on Facebook, many of the posts in the ‘digital society’ topic were longer, more elaborate and contextualized, and even included some aspects of storytelling. In contrast, respective content on Twitter mostly includes (replies to) news stories.

4.7. Discussion and conclusions

In this investigation, we aimed to shed light on the dominant debates surrounding the implementation of Denmark’s new digital identity MitID in 2022 by analysing related posts from Facebook and Twitter. Particularly when looking at the latter, our analysis showcases how difficult it is to interpret isolated tweets or comments that are in effect part of a more extensive conversation. In contrast, the access granted to Facebook data via Crowdtangle does not extend to users’ comments or reactions, but only allows the scraping of posts in public groups. On both platforms, an encompassing investigation would ideally be able to consider users’ dialogues, reactions, and interactions as well. Related to this platform bias, we mentioned that there is a notable gender difference in Twitter users in Denmark, and in many regards, the MitID topic invited ‘technical’ discussions that might be less interesting for female social media users (e.g., Marth & Bogner, 2019). While we cannot make inferences about users’ gender from their profile names and -pictures alone, a large body of research has addressed questions related to gender (non-)differences in digitalization (e.g., Elena-Bucea et al., 2021). Further insights into the role that various socioeconomic factors might play in the adaption of technological innovations could also be informative for considering the MitID debates in Denmark.

In general, we saw that the content in the MitID discussions is dominated by negative sentiment (including swearing); however, users also acknowledge that, like any software, the MitID solution comes with technical problems, is continuously developed, and will likely get better with time.

¹¹ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eGlyO6TwCqQ&ab_channel=DRP3 (February 2, 2023)

Nevertheless, it is obvious that many Danes had to rely on help or technical assistance to use the app, and even supposedly digitally savvy citizens quickly became frustrated with MitID and turned to social media to complain, make fun about, or seek solutions for their struggles. This suggests a mainly critical approach towards the implementation of MitID, rather than citizens appraising the individual and societal benefits of Denmark as Europe's digital champion. We also saw that even though the Danish society relies on digitalization and equality as a key societal value, digital inequalities in terms of skills and potential tangible outcomes still exist.

In the wake of MitID's initial launch, and following the wave of criticism, security holes, and necessary updates, the Danish government established its first ministry for digitalization in December 2022¹². It is likely that the Danish public's (negative) reaction to different digital developments in the past years have contributed to the perceived need for such an institution, and that the problems with MitID merely constituted the straw that broke the camel's back. The MitID case further showcases that, as one of the megatrends investigated by the INVENT team, digitalization presents both challenges and opportunities for European governments and for citizens in their everyday life.

¹² <https://nyheder.tv2.dk/politik/2022-12-15-danmark-har-faaet-sin-foerste-digitaliseringsminister-men-it-branchen-er-skeptisk> (February 3, 2023)

5. Findings for Finland: The case of the new flagship library Oodi and reflections on the role of library in the Nordic welfare state

5.1. Background

Public libraries are key institutions that build a critical bridge between cultural practices and citizens, as well as being a classic landmark of modernisation and public welfare. Public libraries, as open institutions for the public, with presumably no entry barriers for anyone, provide free access to books and culture more widely and could thus be considered key intermediaries and a part of the sphere of cultural production. It can be interpreted that what libraries freely offer to citizens is cultural capital, a metaphor which Pierre Bourdieu has used to conceptualize the maintenance and reproduction of cultural skills and hierarchies that eventually lead to symbolic exclusions between classes (Bourdieu 1984). It has been argued that libraries possess all three forms of cultural capital defined by Bourdieu: it offers objectified cultural capital (books) meant for acquiring embodied cultural capital (knowledge, linguistic skills) which, in turn, has a key role for institutionalised cultural capital (educational qualifications) (Goulding 2008).

Currently, many scholars consider public libraries to be trapped in a whirl of change (Buschman 2003; McMenemy 2009; Michnik 2014; Usherwood 2007). Their role appears to be rapidly evolving in line with the social transformations brought upon by the so-called information age: from a public and democratic sphere offering impartial information and high culture selected by legitimated experts, libraries are seen to have shifted more towards social hubs providing customer satisfaction and are increasingly obliged to prove their public value (Goulding 2008). It remains unclear whether and how these transformations could affect libraries as providers of, above all, cultural capital (Bourdieu 1984; Goulding 2006).

Meanwhile, little is known about how citizens, as library users, perceived these alleged changes. To understand this better, we scrutinize online Finnish discourses on the brand-new Finnish flagship library Oodi, voted as the world's best new library (Yle 27 August 2019). Oodi epitomizes in many ways the rapidly changing role of libraries: it is immense in size, architectonically artistic, and located in the probably most central spot of the Finnish capital Helsinki. Oodi fulfils many of the kinds of "new" functions scholarly research has pointed out: it offers plenty of activities which have little or nothing to do with books or reading such as 3D printers and sewing machines or a cinema and several cafés, and it has often been criticized for having very few books compared to its huge size and three floors. At the same time, the library has faced many problems typical to public spaces of highly urbanized areas: there has been reports on drug use in the toilets and on marginalized ethnic groups occupying space in the lobby and sofas. Since Oodi opened in 2018, there has been a constant public debate about whether it is more an unnecessarily costly tourist attraction or an urban living room than a classical library whose main function is to serve readers. In this paper, we use online data to try to discern the main topics of these debates, to understand the logic of their internal dynamics, and to connect them to the scholarly literature on the changing roles of public libraries.

5.2. Data description

Initially, three suitable sources of data were identified: the Finnish subreddit r/Suomi in Reddit, Twitter, and the comment section of the largest Finnish newspaper, Helsingin Sanomat. r/Suomi was deemed to be a potential data source due to its active Finnish language discussion and high number of

subscribers in the subreddit (around 250000 in 2022-2023). In 2020, 13 % of Finnish people in total had been using Twitter during three previous months, with males and young adults being more frequent users (Statistics Finland 2021). The comment section of Helsingin Sanomat was included in the data to obtain a set of more discursive and moderated data, compared to the relatively short and unidimensional tweets regarding the subject.

To scrape Reddit, R package RedditExtractoR (Rivera 2022) was utilized. All threads with the mention “oodi” were downloaded, and the list of threads was then pruned to only contain relevant threads, from which all the comments were then downloaded. Quantity and quality of the data after this process were, however, small and heterogenous, and it was decided to discard Reddit posts from the data.

Tweets were downloaded utilizing academictwitterR (Barrie & Ho, 2021), which enabled access to historical tweets when combined with access to Twitter V2 API with an academic account. All tweets (excluding retweets) containing either or both keywords “oodi” or “#oodi” were downloaded from 5.12.2018, the opening day of the Oodi library, until 2.11.2022, which was the starting date of the study. A large number of tweets were retrieved with two main sources of noise: first, the word “oodi” yielded the majority of non-Finnish tweets, which were filtered out using language variable provided by Twitter API. Secondly, the remaining data of Finnish tweets contained plenty of tweets not related to the Oodi library. After an inspection of the data, it was decided to keep only those tweets which mentioned Oodi with the hashtag “#oodi”. This reduced the heterogeneity of the data considerably and ensured that final set of tweets which were part of the modelled data were discussing the Oodi library. This process yielded a total of 1337 tweets.

To obtain comments from the Helsingin Sanomat, a search function provided on their website was used with a keyword “oodi”. From the large list of matches, relevant links were then saved, yielding a collection of 39 news articles. Comments from the news articles can be used for research but using automated web scrapers is prohibited in the terms of service of Helsingin Sanomat, thus comments from those news articles were manually copied to an Excel file, after which they were cleaned using automated processes. Data were pruned in two ways: first, each of the relevant articles did not have open comments section. Second, news articles with less than 5 comments were discarded. After this selection, comments from a total of 28 news articles, ranging from 12.11.2018 to 4.7.2022, were included in the data. This process generated a total of 1005 comments. The final size of the corpus, consisting of tweets and comments from news articles, was then 2342 documents.

5.3. Descriptive analysis

A set of standard textual data cleaning procedures were applied to the corpus. Special characters, emojis, links and similar elements were removed. Text was lemmatized utilizing R-package udpipe (Wijffels 2022). Part-of-speech tagging provided by udpipe was utilized to filter out all other words than nouns and adjectives. Tokens shorter than 3 characters were discarded, along with a set of pre-defined stop words, such as the keyword oodi and Finnish term for library, kirjasto. The remaining vocabulary were pruned to contain only tokens with a frequency higher than 6. This process yielded a vocabulary with a size of 790 words. Most common words were such as Helsinki, hyvä, kirja, lapsi, ihminen, uusi, paikka and tila (Helsinki, good, book, child, human/people, new, place, space). The majority of the documents were generated near the beginning of the timeframe under consideration, starting from 5.12.2018; three out of four messages were generated during the first year of the time

frame.

5.4. Topic modelling

After running multiple structural topic models with different number of topics and starting values for the seed, a model with 8 topics was deemed to be the most suitable choice based on both comparing fit statistics of the models and qualitative inspection of the most common words and exemplary answers from each topic. The topics of the selected model are presented in Table FI - 1 - Topics, topic proportions and the most important words and their translations. 8-k structural topic model with date and source platform of the document as covariates.. Next, the model and topics are briefly interpreted, after which we inspect exemplary answers for each topic qualitatively in the following chapter.

Table FI - 1 - Topics, topic proportions and the most important words and their translations. 8-k structural topic model with date and source platform of the document as covariates.

Topic	Topic proportions	Important words	Translation
Architecture	0.13	hyvä, rakennus, ihminen, paikka, maailma, uusi, julkinen, puoli, mieli, arkkitehtuuri	good, building, person, place, world, new, public, side, mind, architecture
Design	0.08	suuri, raha, rakentaminen, suunnittelu, keskusta, suunnittelija, suomalainen, veronmaksaja, asiakas, johtaja, virhe	large, money, construction, planning, center, designer, Finnish, taxpayer, customer, manager, mistake
Infrastructure and renovations	0.12	ovi, kaupunki, vuosi, talo, kerros, pyöröovi, aika, hieno, kuukausi, tapa	door, city, year, house, floor, revolving door, time, fine, month, way
Role of the library	0.12	asia, oma, aika, paikka, osa, tieto, sellainen, koko, erilainen, tärkeä	thing, own, time, place, part, knowledge, kind, size, different, important
Book selection	0.13	kirja, tila, mieli, palvelu, Suomi, vanha, pieni, uusi, kirjallisuus, hiljainen	book, space, mind, service, Finnish, old, small, new, literature, quiet
Social problems	0.07	käyttö, ongelma, huume, käyttäjä, ratkaisu, tilanne, tila, ihminen, vessa, olohuone	use, problem, drug, user, solution, situation, space, person, toilet, living room
Ideological battles	0.11	lapsi, ihminen, mieli, aikuinen, nuori, tapahtuma, nainen, Purra, hyvä, aihe	child, person, mind, adult, young, event, woman, Purra, good, topic
Promotion and hype	0.25	Helsinki, hieno, upea, uusi, Suomi, kello, hyvä, päivä, kiitos, ihana	Helsinki, great, wonderful, new, Finland, clock, good, day, thank you, wonderful

Three topics, all related to the physical space and architecture of the Oodi library, are part of the same

dimension in the discussions about the Oodi library. These topics have varying emphasis, however. The topic of *Architecture* discusses the building and its perceived good and bad aspects. The topic of *Design* contains similar discussions, but it is more focused towards design choices that are sometimes deemed unpractical or unnecessary. Last topic of this dimension is *Infrastructure and renovations*, discussion about needed, upcoming and ongoing renovations at the library.

The topic of *Role of the library* discusses the role of the library institution in contemporary Nordic country, from both points of view of what kind of supply should the library offer for the visitors and what kind of visitors and visiting habits are unwanted in the library premises. These discussions are connected to two other topics, *book selection* and *social problems*, which are analyzed in more depth in the following chapter.

Promotion and hype is mainly composed of tweets promoting Oodi and events taking place there. This topic is the most common way of discussing the Oodi library in the data. The topic of *ideological battles* stems mostly from single event, drag fairy tale telling for children, that took place in the Oodi library which generated a lot of interest and discussion following an intervention of outsider in the event.

The two latter topics discussed above are the only ones which are more commonly discussed in Twitter, as visible in the

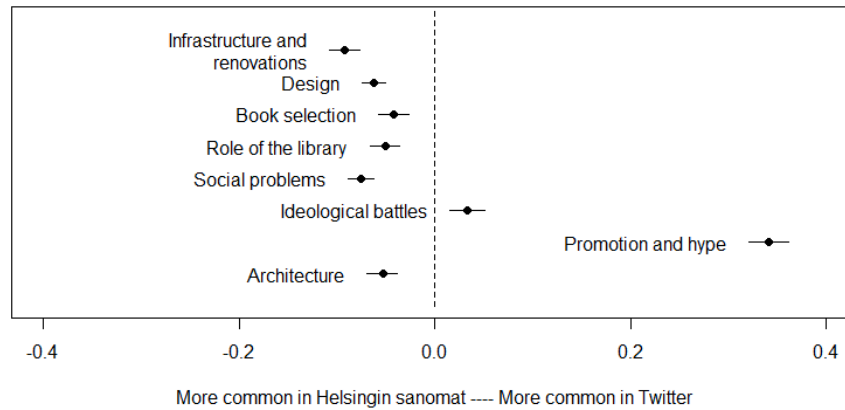
Figure FI - 1. Especially the topic of *promotion and hype* is commonly occurring in Twitter. Aside it and the topic of ideological battles, all other topics are more commonly found from the Helsingin Sanomat comment section. The majority of the topics are discussed evenly throughout the time frame in the analysis. Clear deviances in otherwise uniform distributions are found for the topics of social problems, in the early 2020, and ideological battles, which took place during end of the time frame of the analysis, before 2022. In the following section, we will examine the topics more in detail through a qualitative thematic analysis.

5.5. Thematic analysis

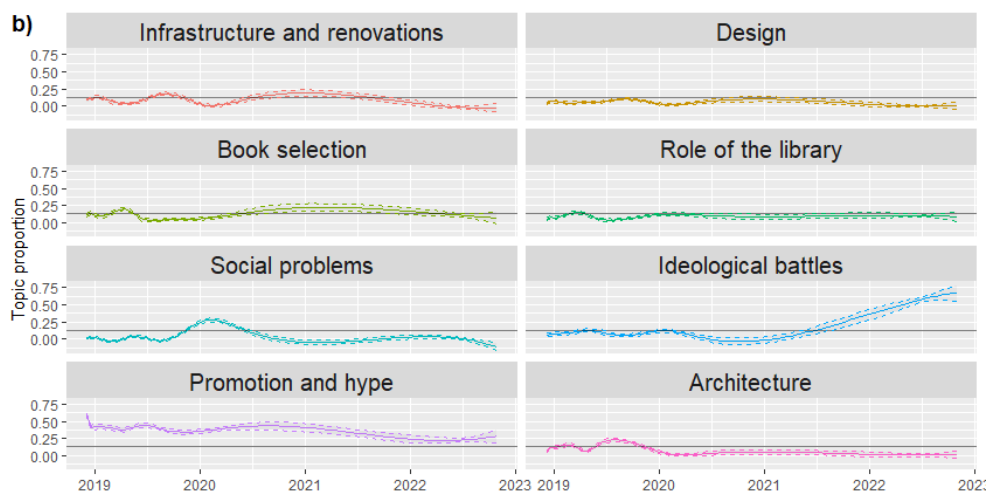
For the thematic analysis, the comments and tweets regarding all eight topics (*infrastructure and renovations; design; book selection; role of the library; social problems; ideological battles; promotion and hype; architecture*) were first superficially skimmed to get a general idea of the content of each topic. The number of comments assigned to respective topic based on the highest probability to stem from that topic varied significantly; for *design*, there were only 85 comments or tweets, whereas the topic of *promotion and hype* contained almost ten times more of them (823). This analysis is based on a brief reading of all comments and tweets, but the subsequent part with excerpts is based on a more consecutive close-reading and content analysis of around 100 comments or tweets per topic. The comments and tweets have been translated from Finnish to English, including the possible hashtags. If the comments or tweets were very long, on some occasions they were cut for the excerpts. Whenever the cut appears in the middle of the comment or tweet, this is indicated with brackets.

Figure FI - 1 - a) prevalence of topics by the source platform, comment section of Helsingin Sanomat and Twitter. Topics on the negative side of x-axis are more commonly discussed in then comment section of Helsingin Sanomat, and vice versa for topics on the positive side. b) Prevalence of topics during the time frame of the analysis. Higher proportion in given time indicates more active discussion.

a)



b)



The first topic of *infrastructure and renovations* is largely centered around the massive negative attention that Oodi received after it turned out that the architects had made erroneous assumptions about through what doors people would be entering the library. Most of the massive numbers of people entering Oodi did not use its main doors – which give to an enormous square facing other important and impressive landmark buildings, modern art museum Kiasma, the new music hall Musiikkitalo, the newspaper headquarters’ house Sanomatalo and further in the distance, the Parliament House. Rather, library visitors came in through a smaller revolving door by the main railway station. This meant that due to so much use, these doors needed to be changed less than a year after opening, and the renovation took four months. The *infrastructure and renovations* topic is mainly consisted of ironic comments on bad planning, the poor competitive tendering of the public sector and the irony of new things breaking much quicker than old ones:

What do you get when you combine the talent of competitive tendering of the public

sector, the Finnish construction trade and taxpayers' money? You get a four-month door renovation in a library-cafeteria opened less than a year ago. Think about it, a four-month door renovation. Jesus. #oodi

Our cabin, in which I nowadays spend more time than at my home in the city, is soon a hundred years old. The doors are original, and they function perfectly. They are good old-fashioned timberwork made out of quality wood. They have been opened and closed definitely more times than Oodi's doors.

This topic also draws important symbolic boundaries between what is considered “miserable Finnish style” and what is seen as international, dynamic and therefore much better:

The process of just handling building permit documents regarding a facade change takes 3 months. Welcome to Helsinki.

If that kind of renovation was well planned, it would take a couple of weeks maximum. But in Finland the culture of construction is such that a majority of the time span of renovations is swallowed by bad planning – and that also costs. Would it finally be to change stagnated policies?

The second topic on *design* underlines Oodi more as a space designed by specialists, who according to some commentators have taken bad and greedy, even morally dubious decisions. A consensus on this topic seems to be that even if Oodi has attracted national (and perhaps especially international) attention, it has been done at the expense of the classical and more modest functions of libraries:

Well, it just happens to be a “library”. It's a similar kind of tourist attraction as the Pisa tower (which is not a real tower) or the Colosseum or the Eiffel tower. A contraption without function.

The design has been extravagant, and the designers have striven for publicity, fame and credit. The flaws of the design are unmasked bit by bit. The taxpayers pay for the errors regarding design. Disgraceful.

The *design* topic also often questions the economic value of what it has meant to build Oodi and critically contrasts it to other public investments such as schools or daycare centres. This aspect is discursively very close to a certain new public management discourse in which public services are expected to provide “value” to their customers:

The important thing is to make it perfect since the beginning, otherwise it's better to not do it at all. This is because Finns can't tolerate that tax money is wasted on a “library” that could have been built with 10 millions instead of 100 millions. With the money saved, they could have patched up for instance Helsinki schools and nurseries, that have been left without fixing.

Could we Helsinki taxpayers get an exact report on the division on the sum allocated for the library administration? Has Oodi taken most of the money, and is this leading to the closing of functioning branch libraries? Would it be time for a movement called “Libraries back to the residents?” I want a library, not a collection of miscellaneous spaces under the library label.

A logical continuation of this topic is the third one on *book selection*. Inside this topic, there seems to be an ongoing conflict between the traditional, old-fashioned library meant for discovering and reading books, and the allegedly modern version of it, the infamous “community centre”:

Oodi is a pretty nice community center, you could hardly call it a library. There are a couple of low bookshelves.

One would think that the main mission of libraries would be to have books visible, now that bookshelves have disappeared from peoples' homes. #oodi Now you really don't see books there, but you see huts for resting and pillows?

Many commentators directly express their unhappiness with the “new” features Oodi and ask directly whether these kinds of new libraries really are libraries at all:

Who decides about these new “libraries”? Well, mostly people born in the 1980s. For them, libraries are not the same thing as they were for previous generations. The new library will probably be a so-called generational experience for many Finns. It will have lots of buzz, while for the previous generations the library was a silent place, you could at most whisper. It was a sanctuary – in a civilization kind of way. Luckily in Helsinki there still are a couple of book libraries of the previous generations. We are living times of a cultural generation rupture.

Oodi is most probably wonderful and much-needed, but is it anymore a library, that's food for thought. I might be old, but in my view libraries have to be peaceful and silent places, you don't need any kind of buzz there.

This debate comes thematically very close to the next topic on the *role of the library*. Here, the concern that “libraries are not anymore libraries” is further spiced with the different kinds of ideas about the ideal customer, and eventually, about the role of public libraries in a changing and rapidly digitalizing society:

I feel like the concept of libraries is strongly changing, it's not anymore what I was used to. The point would be that everyone finds their own place in these libraries, I just feel like regarding Oodi, a really big group won't find it there anymore. The feeling there is so restless that when you step out, you are more restless and grumpy than when you stepped in.

An integral part of the *role of the library* topic comes thematically close to the topic of *social problems*. Here, there is a continuous negotiation on who really has “ownership” regarding public libraries. The topic includes some rather populist tones criticizing the universality of tax-funded public services and hinting that the role of Oodi should definitely not be to accommodate unwanted groups:

Now it would be important to know how many of the visitors pays taxes and how much of that comes to Helsinki, in other words, who are owners. For any other visitors, there should be an entrance fee to cover the costs of that ridiculously expensive pointless building.

This was just what I was afraid of, that we would use tax money to offer some people a place to stay with free toilets. Worse still, if they spread diseases. I visited it once, and for a person that has used libraries since a schoolchild, it was a big disappointment.

At the same time, the *role of the library* topic also includes some ideas about the necessity of a perpetual change and about the fact that libraries, as defenders of cultural capital, cannot cling to old-fashioned analogical forms of knowledge but has to move on to offer new kinds of cultural goods to the clients of a rapidly changing information society. A good example is found from this lengthy comment that exalts the cultural capital residing in the many mobile workers that gather to Oodi:

We have moved from a book society to an information society. Instead of books between covers, the vast majority of Oodi's visitors study the files between the covers of the laptop or the information treasures on their

tablet/mobile phone. (...) Perhaps the purpose of Oodi is to be a part of urban adoption and creation. (...) On the upper level of Oodi, I sense a new kind of silent community spirit of the people present, it could be blown out at any moment and waved to the opposite parliament building as a common greeting. So what is Oodi? Could it be an ode for the information society and for tomorrow?

The topic of *social problems* gathers much of the plentiful media discussions on the many partly unexpected scenarios Oodi has gone through since it opened, many of which have forced politicians and librarians to express more clearly official policies on what kind of behaviour is tolerated in the public libraries. In the media, just like regarding the topic, the most discussed challenges have been related to whether drug users and marginalized ethnic groups are welcome to use the spaces of libraries or whether they are an unwelcome nuisance that should be transferred elsewhere so that the library could accommodate better its “real” customers. On the one hand, a part of the topic is welcoming and holds that indeed libraries are public, uncommercial spaces that should be free for all, at least with some limits:

Oodi is a large multipurpose building where everyone is welcome. If the drug users were given a couple of rooms to use as supervised injection rooms, the situation could calm down and the toilets would remain for the purpose they were originally intended for. Oodi's location for the supervised injection rooms is ideal because the businesses of many users are handled in the vicinity. Oodi also has guards ready. Birds in their little nests agree, and everyone should feel welcome.

On the other one hand, a large part of the topic is close to much stricter views and calls for zero tolerance for the ideal of “everyone’s living room” and strict measures to get rid of “problems”:

There is a simple solution for Oodi's problems: let's renounce of the thought that it is "everyone's living room" and make known that the people that sell and use drugs in Oodi and other hooligans are not welcome, let's increase the number of guards. All aforementioned groups will be removed from the space if necessary, and they will be banned from entering. We can speak some other time about the solution of the drug problem.

A highly related topic is *ideological battles*. Nevertheless, this topic is thematically much more homogeneous than the previous one: the majority of the comments and tweets are connected to a children’s storytelling event that took place in Oodi in July 2022 as part of the Helsinki Pride week. While a drag artist was in the children’s area reading books, outside Oodi there was a small demonstration of ultra-right groups. The demonstration was at least partly fuelled by the comments of many conservative politicians criticizing the event online: for instance, the True Finns’ party leader Riikka Purra ironically commented the event, asking: “Why mental disorders?” and the Christian Democrat party ex-chairwoman Päivi Räsänen tweeted: “Adults’ sex things have nothing to do with children. That kind of activity is close to paedophilia”. This kind of mindset was closely mirrored in the topic:

I consider it a worrying phenomenon that drag men dressed as women do storytelling events for children. I don't understand what else the point is than to indoctrinate the children into a #pride ideology that wants to transform the natural division of the two sexes into gender diversity #oodi

At the same time, many comments and tweets of this topic were voicing the exact opposite views of tolerance and openness to diversity. Many commentators were in fact making reference to the public

library as a “safe space”, one whose legitimizing power citizens can trust in all cases.

It's pretty difficult to think of a more harmless event than a storytelling event that the library has organized for children. For some people it seems to be very hard. #oodi #storytelling

The vandalisation of Oodi's storytelling event proves that we need more of these storytelling events. Just so that our kids don't become these kinds of vandalising adults, but people that understand human diversity #oodi #Pride

The topic of *promotion and hype* is highly different from the other topics. It mostly includes excited comments of people that visited Oodi for the first time – which is reflected in the fact that this topic peaks in the beginning of the time frame and becomes less prevalent over time. While comments here are shorter and less often direct parts of debates or conversations, they share the same internal debate between the different and mutually exclusive roles of libraries, as either common living rooms or as havens of cultural capital. The exact term of “living room” is often present in the comments:

*Congratulations Helsinki and us citizens of Helsinki. Our new living room is now open
♡ #oodi #helsinki #mycity #kirjasto #library #livingroom*

Here there is an inspiring and wonderfully elegant livingroomish feeling. And wow, what a scenery! @oodihelsinki #oodi

In a similar tone of celebration and promotion, but emphasizing the civilizing values of public libraries, many comments express pride and cultural goodwill regarding the fact that people were queuing to Oodi instead of participating in what the commentators considered less legitimate activities:

This is good news. "Civilization has won: The new library got more visitors in the centre of Helsinki than all demonstrations altogether."

I've got to dig this: we Finns are queuing to experience culture, art, civilisation and architecture, and not anymore to multinational fast food chains. #gottalove it @amoskonst @luxhelsinki @HelMet_libraries #oodi

I would say that Finland's future looks pretty bright. Here people are queuing to the library and to the art museum. #Suomi101 #civilization #oodi #amosrex"

Finally, the topic of *architecture* is again centred around a similar kind of polarizing debate as we have seen in many other topics. Here, the debate revolves around who the architects have thought of when planning Oodi: is the library meant for alleged passers-by admiring architectonic “wow” effects and various groups not respecting the original function of libraries, or for real library users that are cast as capable of valuing and appreciating the public services libraries offer? A large part of the comments is, in a spirit of cultural goodwill, appreciative of the architectonic uniqueness of Oodi and connects it with being not only civilized but also dynamic and international:

#ode for civilization ♡ it is just this kind of uncommercial and equal space that the world needs.

What does it matter that the word library brings different connotations to peoples' minds. Lots of books, silence, stagnation. I have been to Oodi more than ten times, always borrowing books. And my spirits have risen. It's a wonderful place! It feels dynamic, you always see many foreigners. And you get the feeling that there are many things going on. Now that they have opened the big third floor terrace, it's even better.

I've lived around the world, in many places, now I've got to know Oodi and I can state that I have not encountered a more marvellous ensemble than that of Helsinki's Kansalaistori square. The Finlandia house, Musiikkitalo, Kiasma, the headquarters of Helsingin Sanomat and now as the latest addition Oodi, these form an ensemble beyond compare. The Sydney Opera House is splendid, New York's Lincoln center has many marvellous auditoriums, Rio's Museum of Tomorrow is great and so on, but all are inferior to Helsinki. You can and must criticize things, but you also have to concede them the value that they deserve. And to believe that we can do things well, even better than elsewhere.

Meanwhile, a large part of the topic considers the architecture of Oodi impractical, stuffy, pretentious, snobbish and therefore embarrassing. Here, again, commentators go back to the fact that architects have not understood well the real needs of library users and that Oodi has been a relatively expensive investment to what it allegedly offers to the taxpayers:

Who are in charge of drafting this building, I would like to know. 160 millions of taxpayers' money is used. Sure, there are architects for all kinds of planning work. Oodi is not planned to human scale or to suit Finnish weather conditions. This is embarrassing wow architecture.

Well, traffic planners draw zebra crossings wherever, and people walk wherever. It would have been easy to guess which door of Oodi would become most used if you took a look at the map and then came a couple of times onsite to follow how the flow of people moves.

Regarding the previous topics, the circle closes in the sense that also the *architecture* topic includes a critical debate on whether the architects of Oodi really have managed to capture and design the spirit of what is understood as a library:

We should think of some new word to characterize Oodi. A library, it's not. A book requires concentration from its reader. Concentration requires silence. It's that simple. They really should have built a swimming pool and a sauna into Oodi. There already are spaces for loitering and sewing, and so on. You really have to look around in order to find even a couple of freaking books from this architectonic creation that they call a "library".

I have got a strong impression that Oodi is called a library only because a space to just hang around would not have been given this kind of spot and budget, not to speak about public legitimization. That's why they take use of the reputation of the generally liked and appreciated library institution even if it's a library only part-time and its main emphasis is in other activities.

5.6. Discussion and conclusion

We have shown that Finnish online discussions on the new and controversial Oodi library in Twitter and in the comment section of Helsingin Sanomat, the largest subscription newspaper in Finland, have been centered on eight topics: these are infrastructure and renovations; design; book selection; role of the library; social problems; ideological battles; promotion and hype; and architecture. These eight topics were deemed to provide a suitable overview of the discussions on the topic. Even when a model with more topics would have been possible to interpret, qualitative reading of the comments and tweets stemming most probably from respective topics provided a fine-grained analysis of the rich,

varying discussion within topics. Discussion in the comments section of Helsingin Sanomat were more versatile and discursive, whereas in Twitter had stronger focus on promotion of the new library. Some topics are more time bound and can be connected to single events, such as the topic of ideological battles which mostly stemmed from single controversial event. Other topics, such as the role of the library, are discussed throughout the time frame we inspected, from opening day of the library in late 2018 until late 2022.

The subsequent qualitative analysis showed that while the topics are thematically different, they all have common underpinnings which have to do with the changing role of public libraries. The discussions clearly show that many of the ongoing transformations are met with both tolerance, curiosity, and cultural goodwill, but also with critical concerns about the vulnerability and, to some extent, even perceived loss of power of the “average taxpayer/reader”. These attitudes seem, to some extent, be polarized against each other. Deep down, all debates touch to some degree upon *who* new public libraries and spaces such as Oodi are meant for – whether for instagramming elite groups, tax-paying book readers, or (also) different socially marginalised and even excluded groups. It can be interpreted that while libraries are more and more casted as social hubs which publicly promote possibilities for community integration (Aabø et al. 2010) and social inclusion (Summers and Buchanan 2018), the publics still largely struggle with the changes. The library’s alleged power to provide and distribute cultural capital (Goulding 2008) is strongly cherished among both tolerant and critical commentators, and the latter clearly use it as a weapon to differentiate between the library users who know to use it and therefore “deserve” it and those who, in their view, don’t.

On a methodological note, it should be said that some topics such as *architecture* and *design* were thematically very close to each other and therefore sometimes partly overlapping. Also, while tweets and comments to newspaper sections had differences, many topics, while centered on one theme, had lots of internal variation, even polarization. For instance, the topic on *social problems* included both harsh criticism on the ethnic groups and drug users loitering in Oodi and voices emphasizing tolerance and openness. In this sense, the qualitative close-reading of the topics proved essential to understand their full logics. Combining here both quantitative and qualitative approaches proved to be a key strategy here.

6. Findings for France: The remotion of Christian statues from the public space and the battle of collective memories

6.1. Background

This report follows the analyses conducted in the second report of the Data scraping taskforce (DST), which investigated the online petitions related to "culture" diffused on Facebook. In this study, one of the petitions that most captured the attention of the French team was the one opposing the removal of the statue of the Archangel Saint Michael in the town of Sables d'Olonne (a town of 45k inhabitants, located 460km from Paris on the Atlantic coast).

Not only this petition was the object of a great visibility over the period 2020-2023 - because of the number of signatories (more than 40k), of interactions on the web (tens of thousands) and of its replay by the media (hundreds of press articles) -, as it was preceded and succeeded by many other similar petitions, being thus very representative of the use of online petitions and of the dynamics they create in the digital space. Above all, this petition (and the interactions concerning it) is at the heart of one of the main themes of the INVENT project, namely, the diversity of culture and the way individuals and groups construct their identities.

Online petitions and the resinification of the citizen's demand

In the second DST study we showed how petitions, a classic object of citizen action and with a very precise legal framework in France, had gained a new use and a new political meaning in the digital sphere. First of all, their use as a tool allowing to impose to the parliamentarians (at the national level) a subject of official discussion formulated and co-signed by citizens has been mostly supplanted by a use in which the online petition is a way to address to the public powers (notably at the local level) the most diverse demands whose legitimacy would come from the volume of signatures it contains.

In addition to this, there is a new use, in which petitions are, above all, a means of making visible a cause, an idea, a theme, a will, without being addressed to a public power or, then, without a clear request being formulated. In this sense, they are similar to political pamphlets in some respects.

Moreover, in this new use of petitions, the difference between the local, national and international levels is totally blurred, since, in order to have a greater support of the Internet users, the petitions use a strategy of increasing the generality of its interest: even if the object of the petition is very local (e.g. the defense of a rooster in a rural village, the existence of a statue in a small town, a neighbor's conflict), the petitions try to take these objects as the manifestation of "universal" problems (e.g. the defense of a way of life, the national identity, the migratory issue).

A statue between sacred and profane space

The statue of the archangel Saint Michael was cast in the artistic workshops of Vaucouleurs in Maule in 1935. Since then, it was exhibited inside one of the parish halls of the church Saint Michel and in the courtyard of the private school Saint Michel. It is only in 2018, in an effort to revalorize the public space around this church, that the city hall of Sables d'Olonne installs the statue in the square in front of the church. This displacement of a few meters of the statue meant, however, its displacement from the private space (the church yard) to the public space (the square). This implies a transgression of the law of 1905, which establishes the separation of church and state in France.

Not long after, the removal of the statue of the archangel Saint Michael was requested from the Administrative Court of Nantes by the French Federation of the Libre-Pensée, a "rationalist" and

"anticlerical" association created in 1890 (but claiming a much older history). The request is based on article 28 of the law of December 9th 1905, which prohibits any erection of religious symbols in the public space from January 1st 1906 (see Box FR 1). Indeed, "the public space belongs to all citizens, it cannot be marked by a religious meaning, which would be contrary to secularism which guarantees the freedom of conscience of all (...) the public space, in the spirit of the legislator of the time, must remain neutral as must be the institutions of the Republic" (Libre Pensée 2022).

Box FR 1 - The 1905 Law and the separation of Church and State in France

Article 1 of the 1905 law states: "The Republic ensures freedom of conscience. It guarantees the free exercise of worship, subject only to the restrictions set out below in the interest of public order". From this follows in particular the principle of neutrality, developed by the jurisprudence of the Council of State (Théry 2012) : The State does not recognize or subsidize any religion and must therefore be neutral with respect to religions. The law has as its corollary religious freedom, freedom of worship and non-discrimination of religions (RP 2022). The French Republic does not recognize, salute or subsidize any cult: there is no more public budget for the cults; the public establishments of the cult are replaced by religious associations; the religious buildings possessed before the law by the State, the departments or the communes remain their properties (RP 2022). The role of the state is now to ensure that religious practices do not disturb public order. Section 28 of the Act specifies that it is "forbidden, in the future, to raise or affix any religious sign or emblem on public monuments or in any public place whatsoever, with the exception of buildings used for worship, burial grounds in cemeteries, funerary monuments, and museums or exhibitions" (Legifrance 2021).

This law was born after violent parliamentary confrontations opposing two French parties: one close to the Catholic Church and considering it as a public service and the other one to the republican State, considering that the State should only take care of the government of the population and the Church of the salvation of its members (Storne-Sengel 2017). After many debates threatening the unity of the left coalition [*Bloc des Gauches*] and opposing the separatists themselves, the Chamber of Deputies finally adopted Aristide Briand's bill for the separation of Church and State on July 3th 1905 by 341 votes to 233 (Scot 2007). It was ratified by the President of the Republic and the head of the government on December 9th 1905. The law of 1905 is not applied in the three departments of Alsace-Moselle, which is governed by the provisions of the Napoleonic Concordat of 1801.

The European Union does not recognize its competence to legislate on the status of religious organizations. It recognizes the variety of legal statuses according to the internal national legal orders (Minnerath 2020). The system of state religion prevails in several countries: Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Greece, Great Britain, Malta, among others. Some states recognize several denominations, which then have a privileged status and often receive subsidies: Austria, Belgium, Germany, Spain, Italy. There are also cases similar to France, such as Sweden, Norway, Portugal and the Netherlands, which have evolved towards a system of separation, although less radical than the French case.

It was precisely to preserve the "neutrality of the public space" that the court ruled in favor of the Libre pensée association and ordered the dismantling of the statue on 16 December 2021. The mayor of the city, Yannick Moreau (anti-European right), appealed this decision in court and, by mobilizing the debate around the "cancel culture", raised the tone of the political debate. The rise in tone is, first of all, marked by an inappropriate generalization, by the mayor and the media, of the court's decision to all Christian symbols existing in France (even those installed before the 1905 law). Then, in the midst

of the presidential campaign, the then far-right candidate Éric Zemmour (and his political supporters) went to the statue to make a speech against the "instrumentalization of justice by cancel culture" in early January 2022.

Shortly thereafter, the mayor of the city organized a poster campaign in defense of the statue and a referendum on March 5th, 2022 around the question "Do you want the statue of St. Michael to remain in front of St. Michael's Church? This consultation had an ambivalent result: on the one hand, those in favor of keeping the statue had an expressive victory among participants (94.5%); on the other hand, the participation rate reached only 5.5% of voters. Thus, the result of this consultation was able to be mobilized both by the groups in favor of maintaining the statue - "more than 9 out of 10 voters (94.5%) wanted Saint Michael to remain on its stand"(Cornet 2022) -, as well as by the groups in favor of dismantling the statue - "the low participation rate shows how little importance citizens attribute to this issue". In any case, the consultation shows the existence of a small but highly mobilized group of citizens in favor of keeping the state in the public space.

Finally, the day before the publication of the judgment of the administrative court of appeal of Nantes, a demonstration with a little less than a thousand people marched on the city in defense of the statue. It is necessary to underline the presence of an important number of former soldiers of the parachutists corps (whose patron saint is Saint Michel). On September 16th, 2022, the Court of Appeal ruled for the final removal of the statue. The mayor of the city appealed once again, this time to the Council of State.

The petition

In this context the petition that is the object of our study was written. It was originally carried at the end of 2021 by the National Interuniversity Union (UNI), a nationalist student association created in reaction to the May movement of 1968 and mobilizing against movements considered by them as radicals (e.g. "decolonialists", "racialists", "islamo-leftists" [sic.] nowadays) and that thinks of itself as "the spearhead of the right in the political and cultural fight with a slogan: "Through education, for the Nation" (UNI 2023). The UNI addresses in the petition to the Administrative Court of Nantes to ask for the preservation of the statue, because:

(...) the radical secularists, accomplices of the cancel culture, have seized our heritage and have denied the Christian roots and culture of France. After the sculptures of Victor Schoelcher in Martinique, Charles de Gaulle in Hautmont, Jean-Baptiste Colbert in Paris and Napoleon Bonaparte I in Rouen, another monument is a victim of deconstruction, a direct witness of the decadence of our Nation! (...)

*Our civilization suffers! **It empties itself little by little of its substance, accepting, with fright, this collapse of our morals and our identity!** At the UNI, as in the other associations carrying high the values of our country which fight at our sides, we are proud of the heritage left by our ancestors, by those who made France as it is today! We are proud of our Christian roots which are the essence of our national community! We ask for the suppression of the decision to remove the statue of St. Michael the Archangel, as well as its conservation in its original location! **These thousand-year-old cultural attachments which forged our collective identity are the prerogative of our Nation! They will resist the progressive drifts that the extreme left wants to impose to us!** (UNI 2023, in bold in the original).*

This petition has been signed by 44,835 individuals to date. Of these, 3,115 have left comments on the petition, most of them outlining how they perceive the dismantling of this statue and the reasons that led them to sign the petition.

Our study will thus focus on the interactions between Internet users in the comments to the above-mentioned petition on the French online petition platform mesopinions.fr, in the comments to the original post on Facebook and in the Twitter conversations¹³. We removed from this original corpus comments or Tweets containing exclusively short expressions of support (e.g. "I signed", "it's done", "I agree" etc.), all identical comments (i.e. composed of exactly the same character string) and Retweets. In the remaining corpus, we removed from the comments all URLs, emojis, references to other users. Finally, we removed all empty interactions (i.e. those whose number of characters is equal to zero). The reduced size of the corpus we observe (especially on Twitter) expresses the "opinion bubble" effect typical of the logic of social networks, where the same information/message is relayed multiple times. Also, most of the comments are short, containing an average of 26 terms (excluded stopwords).

Platform	Number of interactions		Retained Interactions (%)
	<i>Before cleaning</i>	<i>After cleaning</i>	
<i>MesOpinions.fr</i>	3,378	3,135	92.8
Facebook	1,732	232	13.4
Twitter	126,425	6,984	5.5
Total	131,535	10,351	7.9

Figure FR - 1 - Most used terms in comments

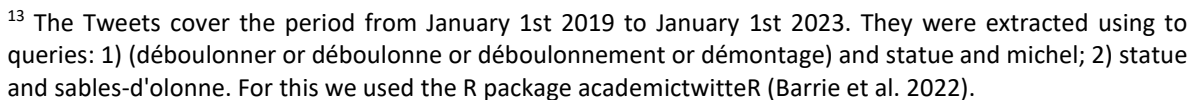


Figure FR - 2 - Most-used terms according to the platform

[illegible]

In order to better capture the whole discussion carried out by users on these three platforms, we employed an LDA model (Blei, Ng, et Jordan 2003) to analyse the corpus. The analyses were conducted on R with the topicmodels package (Grün et al. 2022). After a detailed examination of this corpus, five topics were identified. The topics identified are very close to each other in terms of content and form, expressing more or less accentuated nuances of the discourses carried than true opposition. This shows the homogeneity of the discussion, including, on the analyzed platforms, very few debates or dissonant positions.

Topic 3 (21.2%) puts forward the **cultural heritage of France**, often they make a wrong generalization of the remotion of the statue of Saint Michel to the whole Christian references present on the French territory. **Topic 4** covers interactions involving **identity issues**, such as "cancel culture", "woke", "islamogauchism". This kind of approach is present in **28.8%** of interactions. Finally, **Topic 5 (23.2%)** is the one where the most **religious and mystical aspects** are present, both in the form of a true narrative

in defense of Christianity, as well as making a strong opposition to the "satanic" identity discourses.

In terms of differences between the platforms, we can see that the themes discussed there are not all of the same importance. Indeed, the discussions within *MesOpinions.fr* are much more concentrated around the religious question and the imbrication between the Roman Catholicism and the French cultural heritage. In contrast, *Twitter* is a platform where this type of discussion has less impact, as discussions on this platform are mostly driven by a fierce critique of identity activism. Between the two, discussions on *Facebook* differ from those on *MyOpinion.fr* in the importance of criticism of identity activism, but differ from *Twitter* in the presence of a discussion on the substance of the case¹⁴.

Figure FR - 3 - Top terms per topic

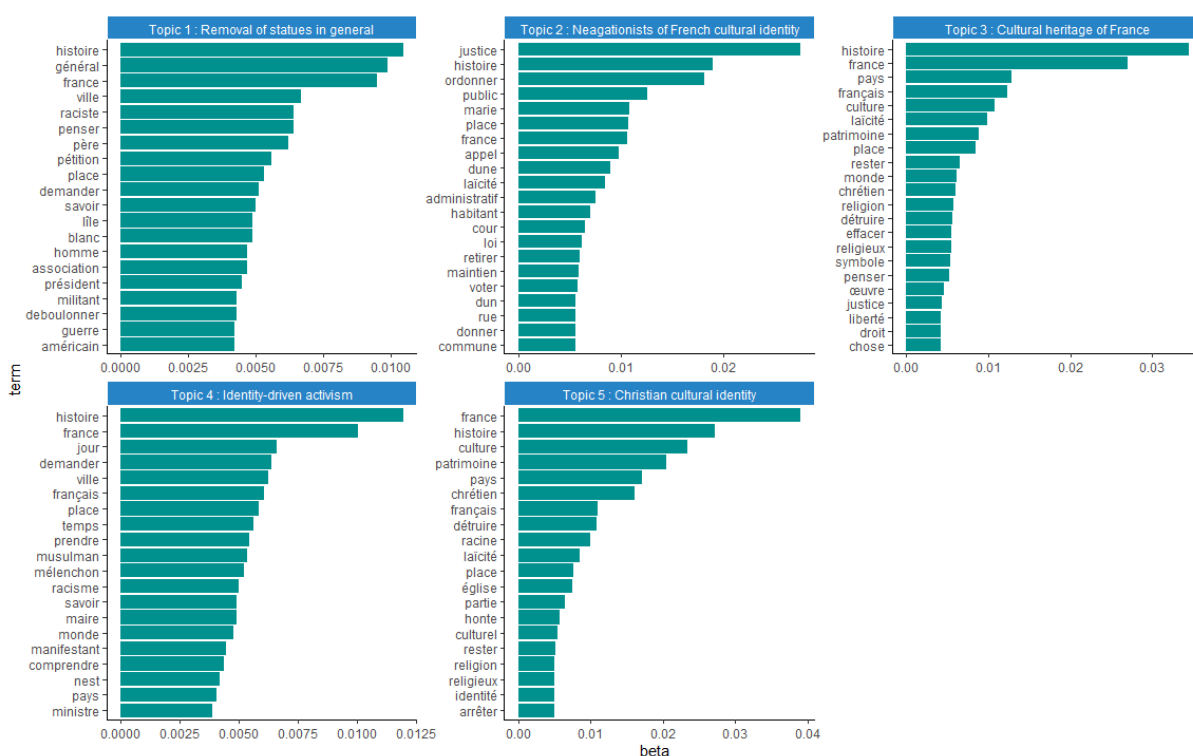
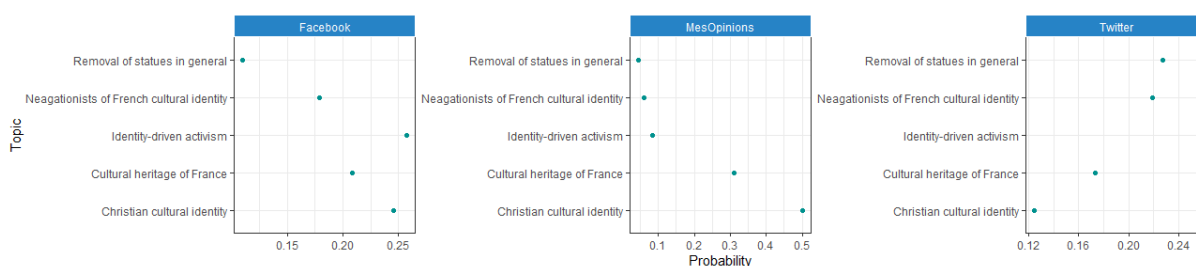


Figure FR - 4 - Topics according to platforms



¹⁴ It's hard to explain these difference at this point, but they may be related to the degree of openness of these different regions of the digital space. Indeed, *MesOpinions.fr* represents more a space of "community-building" [entre-soi] where people willing to sign the petition decide to discuss their motivations to these peers. On the other hand, *Twitter* is becoming more like a "public arena" where marking one's position against other groups becomes a central issue. Certainly the possibility of writing much larger comments on *MesOpinions.fr* and on *Facebook* can contribute to accentuate this tendency, however, in the corpus analysis, the comments on *Twitter* are, in general, more extensive than those on other platforms.

6.4. Thematic analysis

Based on the topics found in the previous phase, we selected the 50 interactions most associated with each topic for a qualitative analysis that will allow us to better understand how users approach the removal of the statue of the Archangel Saint Michel in Sables d'Olonne. First of all, it should be noted that the five topics from the LDA model can be recomposed into three themes: **Christian values and its importance for the French cultural and artistic heritage** (Topics 5 and Topic 3), **the question of the illegitimacy of the decision of the administrative court of Nantes and of the secularism** (Topic 1, Topic 3, and Topic 2), and the question of **anti-identitarian activism** (Topic 2 and Topic 4).

The importance of **Christian values for the French cultural** and artistic heritage is emphasized repeatedly. The overall tone of the comments is "No to the return to retrograde anti-clericalism!" which says "Stop the murder of our culture and our traditions". On the side of the believers, we find at the same time the idea that "You can't destroy an angel. What an idea.", but also :

The human being is not only social and the evolution of his identity also includes the spiritual. To be conscious of a spirituality in our life does not necessarily imply to be in a religion. It is a principle of life. The evolution of humanism towards a consciousness of respect for all that inhabits the earth, of the life of the earth, expresses a philosophy that I do not separate from the spiritual.

The Archangel St. Michel and the fight he leads against the shadow symbolizes a set of qualities and virtues that exist in our life and that many personalities have manifested in their life FOR OTHERS. Currently many good people (benevolent) are fighting against our government and the financial oligarchy (selfish and heartless) anti-democratic who put down the democracy of our French society.

Our history is spiritual. It is not only the historical, scientific and artistic personalities that are the foundation of the evolution of our humanity. The spiritual is inseparable from human life. Harmony-destroying behavior (shadow and coldness) and harmony-organizing behavior (light and warmth) are still going on. May the STATUES of SAINT MICHEL ARCHANGE live on and symbolically inspire the young.

It is a similar sentiment to that of secularists, who say that "it is a shame that a handful of men can do so much harm to our heritage. I am not religious but I have a deep respect for our heritage and our history. Those who are bothered by this turn their heads there is most certainly another beautiful monument to look at."

In contrast, we can find a large number of interactions that express that "The first thing to do in France is to ban Islam, a dangerous sect, and to destroy the mosques. Secularism is just related to the pride of man, who believes he is able to differentiate between good and evil." Or that emphasize "in the meantime.... These intransigent secularists tolerate the street prayers [of the Muslims]... Calls to prayer like in Nice and so many cities in France..... Zero tolerance is for everyone or none!".

The few who take a stand in this debate in favor of the removal of the statue by evoking elements of language related to this topic, do so also aggressively: "Let it remain in the yard of the private school for the bigots and the bigotes. There is better to expose and to value on the public place than these vestiges of the Middle Ages which does not bring anything to the new generations".

Overall, these comments have in common that they do not deal with the heart of the problem explicitly, i.e. the transgression of the law committed by the mayor (and attested by the Administrative Court of Nantes) in taking the decision to place this religious statue in the public space in 2018. Indeed, it is the importance of Christian origins and the appeal made by the *Association libre pensée* that is at

the heart of the debate: "The freethinkers [*librepenseurs*] and their secularism are beginning to tire us seriously. It is our history. They must forget that we are a Christian country. That's all. They'd better take care of other things if they don't know what to do. There are certainly more urgent and intelligent causes to defend !!!! "

The **illegitimacy of the removal of the statue** is explicitly questioned on several occasions: "Justice has nothing else to do than to piss off a city for a statue?", or, as another user wrote, "Shame on the judgment rendered by the administrative court of Nantes". Often the comments express the feeling that "it has really become nonsense! One can be secular and not want statues to be taken down under false pretences!". Even the most friendly comments use a series of misinterpretations of the case and its legal framework, using erroneous and excessive generalizations:

Personally, I do not subscribe to identitarian battles. The roots of France seem to me to go far beyond Christianity...and the tone of this petition saddens me! But by dint of debunking everything - for what past would be "perfect" and irreproachable - since we know that perfection does not exist? - there is not much left of all that the human species has produced as Culture. In other words, it is the death of the human spirit, the only difference with respect to all the other species of the living... Unfortunately, what a sadness, trapped as we are between two radicalities. The statue of Saint-Michel Archange is a work of art, it is beautiful, it is historical, its place is well in front of the church of the same name...Or should we also demolish the church, since it violates the 1905 Law by being located in the public and secular space of the city? This has already been done almost 250 years ago...Should we repeat the past mistakes, demolish the historical cultural traces, change the names of the months and years, cut off all the heads that stick out? What violence! Wouldn't it be better to resort to explanation, pedagogy, teaching - and to the lessons that the study of the past offers us in abundance? So I sign, with a heavy heart...

However, very often this questioning of the secularism of the State disguises, in fact, the current discussion in the French extreme right of an Islamization of France: "The statue of Sables-d'Olonne will be demolished in the name of the separation of the Churches and the State. Secularism of salon ... a statue does not put secularism in danger, do not tremble any more and unleash you rather against the real problem: radical Islamism." But to this violent criticism of Islam there is an equally violent criticism of the secularists: "I thought that the laity were tolerant. I was mistaken!!! The secular bastards must be fought with infinite force."

Finally the **anti-identitarian activism** comments interpret this case through the lens of "cancel culture" and the wave of debunking following the Black Lives Matter movement¹⁵:

The cancel culture, or culture of erasure, of cancellation, straight from the United States. Let's react, let's not let it happen. We can respect secularism, without giving up our Judeo-Christian roots. You, the Vendéans [reference to the French department of Vendée] of François Athanase Charette de La Contrie, the soldier who fought to

¹⁵ Following the brutal murder of George Floyd by the police in the United States in May 2020 and the taking over of the streets by the black lives matter movement, a real wave of unbolting of statues of people linked to the slave trade past has taken several countries involved in the slave trade between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries. In France, this wave has had little impact, in part because the president of the republic, Emmanuel Macron, took the floor, as early as June 14, 2020, to affirm that France will not take down statues of controversial, colonial-era figures as has happened in some other countries: "(...) the republic will not erase any trace, or any name, from its history ... it will not take down any statue"(Perelman 2020).

defend his values, which are also our values. Let's resist everything that wants to impose on us a culture that aims to erase our roots. Yes I sign this petition.

Of course, many other forms of identitarian debate - taken by these users as the basic reason for the removal of the statue - are mentioned many times: "Tired of these amalgams of political correctness of some who confuse everything to the detriment of our culture and our history. Should we also demand the same thing in the foreign countries from which the immigrants who impose their diktat on us come from?". In a more caricatural way, an user says that "the pro-Islamist, anti-Semitic, anti-cop extreme left wants to debunk the status of St. Michel and impose a statue of black Victor Hugo... the total inversion of the extreme left that supports the fachos antifas. You are the fachos today"; other claims that "obviously the crook-islamo-leftist-wokist ideology makes führer. The greenish armbands replace the swastika armbands... Let us fight against the "crooklogists". Let's liberate France."

There are many users who take a step back from this caricatured approach to the problem:

I sign with one hand. Indeed I am against any debunking of statues because nobody has the right to remake history to his own liking, and neither do Christians. Our civilization is not only Christian. Besides, I don't really like the diatribes against the extreme left (from which my thinking is quite distant) which is not more cancel culture than others. Unfortunately this runs through the whole left to the extreme right. One must condemn, not in the name of Christianity, this stupid mania of twisting historical facts (not traditions) to one's opinion.

Others emphasize the "elitist" aspect of the debate on the removal of the statue of St. Michel: "The cancel culture is not the result of popular pressure, which changes sidewalk not supporting the vision of a statue. It is the result of an individual complaint or an association, draping itself in secularism to fight our traditions."

6.5. Discussion and conclusions

In this report we studied the comments and conversations related to an online petition. In these interactions, we were able to understand how individuals consider the issue of the petition (i.e. the removal of a religious figure placed in 2018 on a public square) and what are the conceptual keys they use to explain, justify or defend their positions. The particularity of this case lies in the way in which the question of secularism (framed by the 1905 law in France) is perceived by individuals with a majority of political affiliation to the right and the far right. Indeed, this law, which has been repeatedly used by politicians from the right and far right to restrict the display of religious symbols (especially Muslims) in the public space in France (Prélot 2012), prohibits the erection of religious monuments in the public space since 1906. This creates a situation in which the signatories of the petition find themselves (consciously or unconsciously) defending the transgression of the law (i.e. the maintenance of the statue in the public space) in the name of a religious and cultural identity while some of them are very critical of any form of identitarianism in the interactions analyzed.

Even if we have cases of removal of a religious statue placed in the public space before the case of the archangel Saint Michel in Sables-d'Olonne (e.g. the statue of Pope John Paul II in Ploërmel in 2015), it is after the wave of debunking in the English-speaking world following the *Black lives matter* movement that the removal of religious statues was taken up again by left-wing groups. However, this return to action is done from a completely original perspective: to take legal action to enforce the law. As one of the comments in our corpus evoking Emmanuel Macron's speech above indicates: "The Republic

does not debunk statues', said Macron... but it is more complicated than that".

This context gives the keys to understand the importance of both the discourses against identity activism, "cancel culture", "wokism" present, first of all, in the speeches of the right-wing politicians involved in this case (the mayor of the city, the far-right presidential candidate, deputies, etc.) and of the media, which serve as relays for this approach and through which a large part of the individuals become familiar with the case.

The media's dissemination of a biased interpretation of the referendum organized by the mayor's office in March 2022 also seems to play an important role in the "democratic" delegitimization of state institutions. Indeed, both the mayor's media interventions and press articles often state that "The yes vote won by 94.51%", information that is repeated by many users, including one who states that "The referendum in the municipality concerned was over 94% against. I support the democratic vote". Moreover, Internet users and the media often make an erroneous generalization of the case, i.e. make the assumption that, once the statue of the archangel St. Michel is removed, all other references to Christian culture could be considered as being in danger - whereas monuments that predate the law and those located in private spaces are not concerned.

The question that draws our attention most in this case is that of the relationship between secularism, religious symbols (and, in particular, religious art) and culture (and art). Indeed, if France is a country that has a cultural heritage linked to Christianity (and, in particular, to Roman Catholicism), it also carries a tradition linked to the French Revolution and the struggle against clerical powers. If, generally speaking, these two collective memories follow each other in time (and the law of 1905 is one of the landmarks), religious art in public spaces raises some discussions. On the one hand, as many of the comments analyzed in this report point out, the prohibition of a religious symbol in the public space seems to be perceived (especially by the petition's creators) as a means to deprive any cultural object dealing with a religious theme of its artistic and collective interest, in such a way as to restrict the meaning of culture and art - despite the fact that these are, in France, partly the fruit of religious production. On the other hand, not to integrate the separation between the State and the Church as one of the pillars of contemporary French democracy, puts into question a large part of the societal advances conquered throughout the last century.

This case allows the study of several discussions on social networks related to the debunking of the St Michel statue linked to **multiplicity of notions of culture and cultural policy** (one INVENT's mega-trend). Analysis of comments posted on social networks allows us to observe the three main themes of discussion: the values people want to defend in society (in particular by the defense of Christian values which are presented as under attack), the legitimacy of the decision to remove the statue which refers directly to the law of 1905 and the questions of identity activism which can be linked to cancel culture. What appears clearly through these numerous positions is how **internet discussions exceed the strict legal context specific to this case**. It seems to reveal certain stakes crossing the French society, useful to prolong in case of the elaboration of a cultural policy.

7. Findings for The Netherlands: Contested Heritage: The Golden Coach

7.1 Background on case study

During the second data scraping phase we observed a common thread of petitions focused on the cancelling or altering of cultural objects, traditions, or symbols which are perceived as racist, offensive, or oppressive in the cultural context of today. In recent years, the Netherlands has witnessed a movement of people and institutions becoming more ‘woke’ when it comes to the country’s colonial past, propelling a trend of cancel culture and a rise of public debates and discussion on the topic of contested heritage. The blackface tradition of *Zwarte Piet* or “Black Pete” is a well-known and frequently researched example of this. A lesser-known case of contested heritage is that of the *Gouden Koets* or “Golden Coach”. The petition “The Golden Coach belongs in a museum of slavery” on the platform petities.nl¹⁶ prompted our investigation into this case for the third and final data scraping phase. However, before delving into its prevalent online discourses, we provide some background on this contested cultural artifact. The Golden Coach is the vehicle used to transport the Dutch royal family during the parade held for *Prinsjesdag* (“Prince’s Day”), the nationally recognized holiday when the monarch delivers the Speech from the Throne, opening the parliamentary year and announcing the government’s key plans for the coming year¹⁷. Historically, the Coach was first presented as a gift to Queen Wilhelmina in 1898. It has become tradition for the royal family to ride in the Coach on *Prinsjesdag* since 1903.

The Golden Coach has been a topic of conversation in the past. Notably in 2010, the Coach was attacked by a man throwing a tea light at the coach during the *Prinsjesdag* parade, and at other times the costs needed for the restoration of the Coach has been a contentious matter. However, more recently the discussion has shifted toward discussing the colonial heritage of the Coach, manifested most prominently through the side-panel door of the Coach containing an artwork depicting slaves in service of the Dutch queen at the time. Today’s discussion centres on what role or purpose this cultural artifact should hold and includes fiercely held opinions both for and against its continued use. Some people believe that the Golden Coach is tradition and part of Dutch heritage, arguing that cancelling the Coach represents a woke movement that threatens a part of Dutch heritage. On the other side of the debate, people argue that these depictions of slavery, though historically accurate, are oppressive and ought not to be paraded around so broadly, in a way that romanticizes the colonial heritage upon which the Netherlands prospered. Rather, as argued in the petition, the coach and its complex history, belong in a museum.

While at first glance this debate might appear to be one of finding the right context, the online discourse reveals that this debate is very much rooted in underlying issues pertaining to diversity, inclusion, otherness, shared identity, belonging, and ultimately social cohesion within a multicultural society. For this reason, we chose to focus our final data scraping phase on this case to bring into view the manner in which a contested matter of cancel culture is discussed online. We

¹⁶ [De Gouden Koets hoort in een slavernijmuseum thuis - Petities.nl](https://petities.nl)

¹⁷ More information at: <https://www.government.nl/topics/budget-day/princes-day>

intend to capture nuances of the debate that may go on to inform the way cultural policies are created in the future.



Figure NL-1: Artwork on the side-panel door of the Golden Coach (source: Archive of the City of Amsterdam)

7.2 Data description

The following report is based on the data gathered from the social media platform Twitter. Though the impetus to study the case of the Golden Coach stemmed from the petitions widely shared on social media platform Facebook (during data scraping phase II), we felt that gathering a sense of the general discourse surrounding this case and its contested heritage was best done not on Facebook, but rather on Twitter. Unlike Facebook, where discussions tend to happen in one's relational sphere, Twitter tends to be the virtual space where individuals comment on and express their sentiments towards current news and relevant public discussions on a grander, more public scale. Therefore, in line with our scraping of tweets related to the key term "culture" during data scraping phase I, we scraped Twitter at large for content related to the key term "Gouden Koets". Using the Dutch spelling for the Golden Coach not only helped to situate our inquiry in The Netherlands, and possibly some Dutch-speaking former colonies; it also was very efficient at precluding unrelated discussions. That is, the use of the Dutch word for 'golden' in succession and conjunction with the word for 'coach' was both a reliable and accurate measure for solely yielding tweets related to the Golden Coach in question and the story of its contested heritage we intended to explore.

Data scraping took place in November 2022, using the Academic Twitter API and a script written and run using the programming language "R". This script allowed us to scrape a total of 58,712 tweets related to the Golden Coach between January 2011 and November 2022. This timeframe was chosen because the earliest news articles available on reputable Dutch news outlet NU.nl related to the contested heritage of the Golden Coach date back to 2011. This extended timeframe of just over ten years was deemed useful to capture various notable incidents related to the Golden Coach and how these have affected public opinion and debate over time. It should however be noted that our dataset excludes tweets from December 2022, the month during which the Dutch government issued a formal apology for its slavery and colonial past, a momentous occasion in history that is believed to have been brought about in part by the discussions surrounding the Golden Coach.

7.3 Descriptive analysis

Following the data collection, several things were done to clean and prepare the data for analysis, including the removal of stop-words and the lemmatization of words. Once the data was cleaned, we first produced two descriptive graphs to gain an understanding of how the public discussion has progressed across our timeframe of 10+ years. Figure 2 presents the distribution of tweets over time based on when they were created, while Figure 3 presents the cumulative relevance of tweets over time. What these graphs indicate is that public debate surrounding the Golden Coach on Twitter was prevalent at various instances through the years 2011 - 2016, before flattening out slightly until mid-2020 when discussion reignited and remained topical throughout 2022.

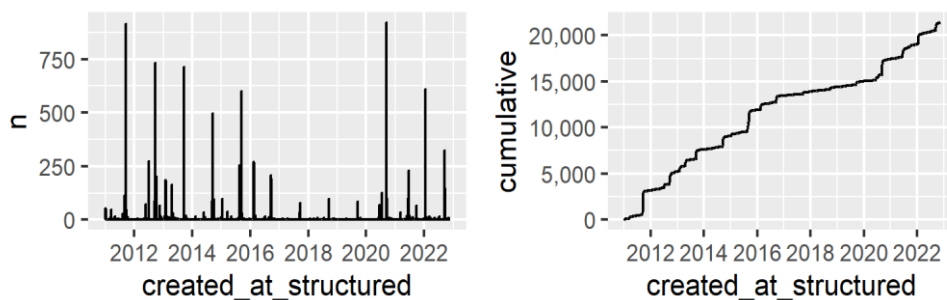


Figure NL-2: number of tweets over time Figure 3: cumulative number of tweets over time

The peaks on the graph in Figure 2 correspond and may be attributed to notable incidents in the contemporary historic timeline of the Golden Coach. The tea light incident in late 2011 accounts for the first high peak, while the peaks that follow it throughout 2012 and 2013 tended to focus on news coverage surrounding its aftermath. Talks about the Golden Coach's restoration, the considerable costs thereof, and the Glass Coach that was to be its temporary replacement dominated the discussion throughout 2015 and 2016. From 2020 onward the discussion centred on the use of the Coach post-restoration and the debate on whether it ought to belong in a museum because of the slavery imagery depicted on it. While we did find a few tweets noting its problematic colonial past as early as 2011, this narrative only became dominant between 2020 and 2022. This timeframe mirrors other public conversations around the topic of race in the Netherlands that may have been sparked by the increased relevance of the Black Lives Matter movement following the death of George Floyd in 2020.

Besides a timeline of relevance, the descriptive analyses we ran also provided preliminary insight into the content of the discussion by showcasing the terms that were used most frequently in our dataset. Table 1 displays the ten most-used words and their respective frequencies. As is to be expected, the word "Prinsjesdag" — the public holiday to which the Golden Coach is historically linked — was by far the most frequently recurring term; but also, words "king" and "queen" denote the theme of the monarchy that pervades online discourse surrounding the Coach. The words "assailant" and "man" referring to the tea light incident still belong to the top ten most-used terms despite being topical during the first half of the decade. However, we can also see the words "black", "museum", and "restoration" being among the most used, signalling the topic of the Coach's colonial past and its contested purpose today, which has gained prevalence toward the latter half of the decade.

Table NL-1: Ten most frequently used words

Keywords (original)	Keywords (english)	Frequency
Prinsjesdag	Prince's Day	3571
Jaar	Year	1879
Koning	King	1547
Museum	Museum	1407
Belager	Assailant	1066
Zwart	Black	860
Goed	Good	855
Koningin	Queen	808
Restauratie	Restoration	760
Man	Man	731

7.4 Topic modelling

Having completed a first round of descriptive analyses, we continued by conducting a structural topic modelling to gain a better sense of the sub-narratives and nuances present in the dataset. To determine the optimal number of topics, we employed computational methods to assess the semantic coherence and the exclusivity of various models, landing on $k=8$ being the best trade-off between the two measures. Table 2 shows these 8 topics produced by the topic modelling and the main keywords associated with each. Even so, upon manually inspecting the topics for their semantic coherence, we found that the model was not as distinctive in revealing sub-narratives as we'd hoped, making it difficult or at times impossible to interpret them meaningfully. Many tweets that were assigned as belonging to the same topic lacked a clear enough common thread. For this reason, we chose not to label the topic modelling further, but rather to rely on a qualitative thematic analysis to reveal the underlying context and themes that make up the contested heritage discussion of the Golden Coach.

Table NL-2: Topic modelling results

Topic 1	Topic 2	Topic 3	Topic 4
Ander (“other”)	Mens (“human”)	Koning (“king”)	Restauratie (“restoration”)
Nederlands (“Dutch”)	Tijd (“time”)	Nieuw (“new”)	Kosten (“costs”)
Tentoonstelling (“exhibition”)	Land (“country”)	Klaar (“ready”)	Afbeelding (“image”)
Koloniaal (“colonial”)	Paar (“pair”)	Nederland (“The Netherlands”)	Miljoen (“million”)
Discussie (“discussion”)	Kind (“child”)	Voorlopig (“temporary”)	Goud (“gold”)
Omstreden (“controversial”)	Wraking (“challenge”)	WillemAlexander (“Willem Alexander”)	Suriname (“Suriname”)
Topic 5	Topic 6	Topic 7	Topic 8
Jaar (“year”)	Prinsjesdag (“Prince’s Day”)	Zwart (“black”)	Museum (“museum”)
Belager (“assailant”)	Dinsdag (“tuesday”)	Koningin (“queen”)	Mooi (“beautiful”)
Man (“man”)	Gewoon (“normal”)	Piet “[Black] Pete”)	Geschiedenis (“history”)
Route (“route”)	Paleis (“palace”)	Amsterdam	Paard (“horse”)
Waxinelichthouder (“tea light holder”)	Lang (“long”)	Traditie (“tradition”)	Geld (“money”)

7.5 Thematic analysis

To complement the quantitative analysis and to reveal the desired layer of depth of the debate, we conducted a qualitative thematic analysis using the topic modelling as a guidance for selecting our sample. For each of the 8 topics produced by the topic modelling, we selected the 30 tweets that were most strongly associated with each topic. In addition, 30 more tweets were selected at random from the full dataset, leading to a total of 270 tweets that were analysed.

The analysis revealed three central themes, or levels of discussion when it comes to the debate and contested heritage of the Golden Coach. In what follows, each theme can be seen to flow into the next and to progress in terms of depth and addressing the underlying root of the debate. For each theme, several tweets have been chosen to illustrate the sentiment of the discussion. These tweets have been translated from Dutch to help ensure the anonymity of authors who did not give explicit consent to participating in this study; the ambiguity of translated word choice making it harder to trace back the tweets that were cited.

Theme 1: The surface level

Scraping online discourse related to the keyword “Gouden Koets”, our dataset also contained a number of tweets that did not directly appear to discuss the debate of contested heritage—hence remaining at the surface level. They however do indirectly set the tone and help us to understand the atmosphere in which this discussion does take place. A considerable number of tweets comprised mere announcements regarding the 2010 incident of a man launching a tea light at the

Coach. These tweets were near-identical in their content and lacked much depth. Other more notable tweets in our dataset simply entailed people (live) tweeting about attending the *Prinsjesdag* parade or sharing fun facts about the history of its tradition:

#Tealightthrower Assailant Golden Coach is being released.

Lunchtime. Just reached home in time to see the Golden Coach with the King and Queen inside #Prinsjesdag

Did you know that the Golden Coach is a typical Amsterdam artifact? Made in the factory of the Brothers Spyker on the Stadhouderskade, it was presented to Wilhelmina at her inauguration on 7 September 1898 by the Amsterdam bourgeoisie, in the Paleis voor Volksvlijt. #goldencoach @OurRoyalFamily

These surface level tweets illuminate the following point of value: it sketches the pleasant and excitable sentiment some Dutch citizens hold toward *Prinsjesdag* and the role of the Coach in its parade, and more symbolically, the role in shaping their sense of tradition and national pride. Other tweets within this first theme are ones related to the restoration of the Coach that started in 2016 and commentary on the divide between the rich and poor in the Netherlands:

'We need to cut back' said a multimillionaire who drives around in a GOLDEN coach

Explain this to me: in 2012 we'll have an economic cut-back, but today we are donning expensive hats and a whole puppetshow/parade including a golden coach!

"Rutte [Prime Minister] is keeping restoration costs a secret. It is precisely this secrecy that causes irritation and creates distance.

These tweets show a rather different sentiment, as can be witnessed in the scoffing or incredulous tone. They bring to light not only the perceived disparity between the wealthy and less affluent members of society, but also the relation between the monarchy and another part of society. So, when it comes to Dutch heritage there are those who are not as enthusiastic about the monarchy and its traditions, especially when these are upheld by the taxpayer's money. In this first theme already, we begin to see how people bring into question the message that is being sent when the Coach is being used at the parade in all its golden exuberance. They begin to be critical of the role of this cultural artifact, albeit not (yet) for reasons related to the colonial past. This forms a nice bridge to the second theme and level of discussion that came from our thematic analysis.

Theme 2: the critical level

The second theme concealed in our dataset involved a more critical level of discussion surrounding the utilization of the coach. For context, in 2016 the Coach went into a period of restoration during which a Glass Coach was used on *Prinsjesdag* to act as its temporary replacement. Upon the restoration's completion in 2021, the new Golden Coach was stationed at the Amsterdam Museum and made available for viewing to the public. By then, the side-panel door of the Coach containing slavery imagery had become a dominant part of the general public discussion (though, we have found tweets signalling its problematic nature as early as 2011). People were debating whether the Coach was still fit for use on *Prinsjesdag*, and if not, what ought to become of it. In January 2022, the King announced that he would no longer ride in the Coach, not until the Netherlands is ready for it, nodding to the heated public debates. The tweets below show how the news of the Coach remaining stationary in a museum was received by one side of the debate.

@[fellowtwitteruser] @[NewsWebsite] Haha, it might make some people happier if the coach remains in the museum. Here is a tip for the sour grapes: there are still plenty of videos in which the golden coach makes its rounds in all its glory with a proud Willem-Alexander and Maxima inside. Oh, and another tip: don't worry so much and laugh about it.

'The Golden Coach will only be able to ride again when The Netherlands is ready for it,' said the King. I don't think we will ever be 'ready' for such an expression of colonial domination, but we've been 'All-ready' done with this stuff for some time now! Put those panels up in a museum and put some new doors on the Coach. Done!

@[fellowtwitteruser] There is no need for an iconoclasm. When it comes to the coach we can just use a different model that doesn't give off the impression that slavery is okay. The golden coach can be nicely placed in a museum, with didactic explanation.

This side of the debate looks quite favourably upon the Coach's termination of use, acknowledging the artifact's connection to Dutch colonialism, and urging that this ought not to be romanticized. Many of the tweets agree that exhibiting the Coach in a museum where more historical context can be given is a suitable solution, noting also that it is okay for times, cultures, and traditions to change and adapt. On the other side of the debate however, the King's news and the purpose of the Golden Coach was thought about very differently:

Don't deny the 'beautiful, colorful' Dutch past: let the image of slavery stay on the Golden Coach.

@[TV program] Soon he will announce that the Golden Coach will no longer be in operation, so he will be popular again. Until the next incident.

Whiners and their fear of losing votes. Piss right off. The coach is a gift from Amsterdam to Wilhelmina! That's what it's about! 'House of Representatives struggles with a return of the restored Golden Coach. Politics...

@[fellowtwitteruser] Guys, black Pete is no longer allowed, the golden coach is no longer allowed, and the people give in. Just you wait, before long the monarchy will be gone too. And we're allowing this to happen, Dutch people need to wake up...

These tweets paint a rather different picture. Part of Dutch society view the Royal Family riding in the Golden Coach on *Prinsjesdag* as tradition they hold dear, something they grew up watching; and, therefore, see its cancelling as a denial of a part of their heritage and a possible erasure of a part of Dutch history. What the data also revealed is this perceived common occurrence of cancel culture and a 'woke' movement at play that inhibits other traditions or customs for reasons of being labelled offensive or oppressive. These tweets would often criticize or accuse the monarchy and the government for giving in to this movement to maintain popularity and appease the public with a more left-leaning agenda. To summarize, the reception of the Golden Coach being destined for a museum ranged from a charming to a troublesome solution. In this second theme online discourse surrounding the Coach assumed a critical tone on both sides of the spectrum, already alluding to the deeper-rooted nature of the issue that flourishes in the third theme.

Theme 3: The underlying and intersectional level

The third theme and level of discussion that came forth from our thematic analysis can be best described as revealing underlying prejudices and moving beyond the physical object of the Coach itself; rather, discussing the themes of colonialism, slavery, and a multicultural society at large. From approximately 2020 onwards, the debate of the Golden Coach and its infamous side-panel has gone paired with public discussions about whether the Dutch government should issue a formal apology for its slavery and colonial past, whether descendants of the enslaved ought to be compensated in some form, and whether *Keti Koti* (July 1st), the day marking the abolishment of Dutch slavery, ought to become a national holiday of remembrance. While such efforts aim to bring fragmented segments of society closer together, there has been mixed reception:

*Okay, can we now make the Pete's black again and start using the Golden Coach?
And be a normal, sensible society? #slavery*

*@[Prime minister] Why would we want a shared future? Everything from the past is
'wrong' according to those people over there, from the Golden Coach to Black Pete.
Can we please become the Netherlands again?*

What is interesting to note from such tweets is the value judgments made on what makes for a 'normal' society. Phrases like 'those people over there' and 'become the Netherlands again' paint a picture of otherness, of an Us vs. Them narrative. The striving for social cohesion within a society and the recognition and inclusion of its diversity is quite literally being called into question. Other tweets within the dataset revealed even more heated, xenophobic sentiments and prejudices based on racial stereotypes:

*@[Popular columnist] Stop this nonsense! I'm never ever going to apologize or say
sorry for something I was not and am not responsible for. Suppose I say sorry, what's
next? Should I expect a claim? Because, of course, it's about making money.*

*@[fellowtwitteruser] Sincerely hope that the Golden Coach has a little buoyancy,
then she [Dutch politician with Surinamese background] may personally bring it
back to Suriname. Under the condition that she never comes back and never hooks
up with a white millionaire again.*

This level of discussion not only reveals underlying perceptions, but also sees people discussing the Golden Coach and its cancelling on an intersectional level. Arguments of race, socio-economic status, geographic location, and elitism compound to justify the actions being taken.

But is it just a black and white discussion? Isn't it a rich and poor discussion? My ancestors lived in a turf hut and were exploited by the elite. The Golden Coach belongs in the museum. #bnr #askmeanything

@[[fellowtwitteruser] The golden coach (along with the monarchy if need be) can go into a colonialism museum as quickly as possible if you ask me. Lest we forget that a person may never again be seen as inferior to another.

Am. @[Dutch politician], mayor of @[Municipality Gouda], notes that the village where he is from Bleskensgraaf, had merely one culture. He also noticed during conversations about the golden coach how much suffering there still is. He also addresses present-day slavery. All this in response to Ketji Koti.

The quotes used in this results chapter speak to the polarized nature of the Golden Coach debate. Though it must be said that there were also a few less extreme and more nuanced opinions found in the dataset such as the one below:

Now, I am personally not that sensitive to the 'Everything is racism' and 'Cultural Genocide'- shouters that dominate the public debate these days, but I agree that the Golden Coach has a golden future as a museum piece, as @[magazine] writes.

Calling out the cancel culture trend while seemingly forming a personal stance based on the merit of the discussion, this quote gets at the crux of the case. How can we understand both sides in a heated debate of contested cultural heritage, in the face of popularized cancel culture rhetoric, in a society with polarizing viewpoints on matters related to diversity and inclusion, shared identity, a sense of belonging, and social cohesion? We will explore this question in the discussion and conclusion chapter below.

7.6 Discussion and conclusion

In this data scraping report we set out to explore the prevalent online discourses related to a controversial cultural case in the Netherlands. We took the petition "The Golden Coach belongs in a museum of slavery" from the second data scraping phase as a starting point for exploring the topic of contested cultural heritage and the movement of cancel culture relating to cultural artifacts being perceived as racist, offensive, or oppressive. Our analyses have shown that the debate surrounding Golden Coach follows a timeline across which: the appreciation of the Golden Coach tradition, the scepticism towards the monarchy, the divide between rich and poor, the signalling of a woke movement, the need for acknowledgement and education about the colonial past all come up as relevant sub-themes. What has proved an interesting finding is that over the course of ten years, different levels of discussion have been identified that seem to progress and give way to one another as time passes. People engaged in the discussion about the Coach at a surface level during the early years of 2011-2015 recorded in our dataset. From 2016 onwards, people began to engage in discussions about the Coach at a more critical level when the topic of its side-panel became more prominent. And beyond 2020, the discussion seemed to have surpassed the Coach and centred on the underlying issues related to it, as people engaged in the discussion on an intersectional level.

As this data scraping phase and the ones that precede it have shown, people care about culture and are willing to raise their voices about it online, no matter which side of the debate they fall on. In doing so, they reveal their perceptions toward various societal values of culture and different

megatrends taking place in Europe at large. In the results chapter, we see how societal values of culture such as openness, tolerance, and belonging are challenged. The findings indicate how part of society show themselves to be averse to the blending of or adjustments to cultural tradition as a way to form a shared identity. At the same time, others argue that inclusion of diverse perspectives, identities and acknowledgement of complex heritage would only enhance social cohesion in society. This discussion takes place against the backdrop of megatrends like globalization, migration and rising social inequalities.

So what might be learned from this case? When it comes to denying heritage and the woke movement of cancel culture, this case shows that there is nary a consensus on who is committing the so-called crime. Those against the ‘woke’ movement of cancel culture are urging fellow member of society to ‘wake up’ and condemn this movement. And with regards to the Coach, who are really the ones denying Dutch heritage? Those who wish to cancel or amend a part of Dutch tradition and put the Coach up in a museum, or those who close their eyes to the Dutch colonial heritage and the lasting impact this has on present-day society? Across Europe similar quandaries are being faced as citizens question what role cultural artifacts relating to old colonial powers (statues, street names and other traditions) should hold. As such, those in the field of cultural policy may wish to heed the following implications. As the different levels of discussion found in this study attest, controversial debates and the change they wish to accomplish build over time. To fully grasp the context of online debates rooted in diversity and tradition, it pays to go back in time and observe how the discourse builds over a longer period. The understanding of heritage — what forms it and what takes away from it — can be perceived very differently across a society; and as a result, can foster a polarized hostile atmosphere where the two parties have a completely different understanding of what the issue at hand is ‘really’ about. This is important to take into consideration if one wishes to facilitate open and nuanced conversation.

Finally, we wish to address some choices made and resulting limitations of this study. This data scraping analysis is based on one social media platform Twitter, unlike the analyses conducted by other countries in this report, which compare multiple platforms. For the scope of this case, the Twitter data we scraped was able to provide an ample amount of data with perspectives of people from either side of the debate. However, future studies may consider looking at the debate of the Golden Coach on other platforms such as Reddit, Facebook, or on particular news sites, as these may lend themselves to lengthier and perhaps more harboured opinions.

8. Findings for Serbia: Reality programs and social conflict

8.1 Background

For the last phase of data scraping, the Serbian team decides to research more about social discourse about reality programs as another dividing line in Serbian society. For about 30 years, Serbian society has been increasingly divided between two large groups. The larger group is the “average Serb,” or “The First Serbia,” and the smaller group is “The Other Serbia.”

Table RS - 1 – Characteristics of First Serbia and Other Serbia

First Serbia	Other Serbia
More traditional	More liberal
Nationalist	Multi-Cultural
Music: Turbo-Folk	Music: Rock, Jazz, Blues, etc.
Loves Putin	Doesn't like Putin
Against LGBTQ+	Pro LGBTQ+
Religious	Agnostic/Atheistic
More often loves Reality shows	Against Reality shows
TV Channels: Pink, Happy, RTS	TV Channels: N1, Nova S
Against Kosovo independence	Indifferent/Pro Kosovo Independence

So, there is a lot of things where First and Other Serbia can't agree about. But Reality shows are different because leaders of first Serbia (leaders of some political parties like Dveri, Zavetnici, and DSS) are also against reality shows.

Both of these groups agree about the consequences of reality Shows in Serbia. For context, Reality shows in Serbia are nothing like Kardashians or similar shows. In Serbia, the two most popular reality shows are “Zadruga” and “Parovi,” in the same format, on different televisions. These shows are full of violence, sex, and swearing. People in this show often have sex or fight each other in prime time. These shows are unregulated, and owners of TV channels who show these reality shows are close associates of the ruling party and can present whatever they want.

Last couple of years, groups of young people decided to do something about this, and they wanted to do a campaign about banning reality shows or regulating them in any way through petitions and pressure on the government. The most prominent actress of this campaign was NGO “Kreni Promeni” and “Udruženje za zaštitu ustavnosti i zakonitosti - UZUZ.” They organize petition signing, round tables, etc., to get in touch with citizens and to explain their goals. For now, nothing changed. REM - The ruling party manages the institution regulating media content in Serbia, and they can't independently decide what to do. Because Pink and Happy (televisions that show Reality) are apologetics to the ruling party and state propaganda, the government doesn't want to regulate them.

8.2 Data description

The following report is based on data gathered on Twitter because most prominent actors who talk about reality and other social issues in Serbia do this through Twitter. For data scraping, we used the R package `academictwitter`.

We scraped 5659 tweets about reality, and topics relevant to our research, such as banning, culture, and unculture. At first, we had many more tweets, but we cleaned all of the tweets from the news portal that talked about gossip related to reality shows.

8.3 Descriptive analysis

Our top ten words can group into a couple of segments. In the first segment, the two most frequent words in our case are “Program” and “Reality,” which are crucial for debate because they define the topic.

Table RS - 2 – Words frequencies

Word	Frequency
Program	1978
Reality	1766
Petition	1463
Ban	912
Restriction	852
People	798
Pink	575
Culture	574
Law	462
Signature	401

At following three words: “Petition,” “Ban,” “Restriction,” and “People” is next set. These words tell us about the dominant discourse about reality shows. Most tweets talk about the necessity of the prohibition of reality shows. In this set of words, we can also add “Signature.”

The last set of words is “Pink,” “Culture,” and “Law.” Pink is one of the most popular TV channels in Serbia. They show the very popular reality show “Zadruga.” Besides that, Pink TV is famous as the promoter of turbo-folk, kitsch, nationalism, and spreading state propaganda.

So, watching or refusing to watch Pink TV is a political and cultural statement.

Culture is the frequent word because reality shows something opposing culture. In Serbian everyday speech, “culture” defines just high culture, and everything else is “unculture.” Reality shows are the best representation of that.

In the end, “Law” probably show us the necessity of regulating television broadcast.

8.4 Topic modelling

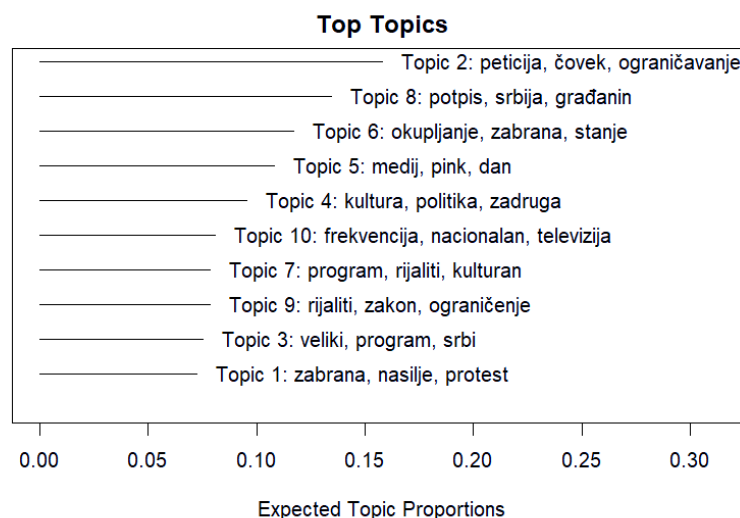
Following the descriptive statistics, we proceeded to the stage of topic modeling, resulting in ten topics. Table 4 displays the titles of these topics, along with five related words for each topic.

Table RS - 3 – Words per Topic

Topic 1 Protest	Topic 2 Petition	Topic 3 Victory	Topic 4 Culture	Topic 5 Media
ban	petition	big	culture	media
violence	human	program	politics	pink
protest	limitation	serbs	zadruga	day
country	program	new	question	people
child	reality	victory	value	rts
Topic 6 Prohibition	Topic 7 Reality	Topic 8 Citizen	Topic 9 Law	Topic 10 Television
gathering	program	signature	reality	frequency
prohibition	reality	serbia	law	national
state	cultured	citizen	restriction	television
extraordinary	square	necessary	watching	interview
pink	pašić	pink	side	pink

Topics 1 and 2 presenting activistic part of a discussion about reality shows where people want to do something to ban or restrict reality shows. Topic 3 shows us optimism within groups working towards restricting reality shows. They collected enough petition signatures to present this problem to parliament (but nothing has changed). The following two topics are related, and they talk about culture and the absence of culture in Serbia because of some television channels. Interestingly, topic 8 presents the necessity of civil activism to solve problems in Serbian society. In the couple of ten years, we have had countless protests, but just a few managed to change something. Also, topic 8 is in the top two topics.

Figure RS - 1 – Distribution of topics



8.5 Thematic analysis

Following our presentation of insights from topic modeling, we conducted a more in-depth data analysis using thematic analysis. We used 20 tweets per topic, a total of 200 tweets.

The most frequent themes in these tweets are politics, culture, law, and petitions.

Politics is the central theme in Serbia. It doesn't matter about we are talking about; politics is always the central theme. Serbian society is deeply politicized, and the majority of citizens have some opinion about politics, and they frame every other topic in Serbian society.

Culture is also one of the important themes. As we previously mentioned, watching some tv program or listening to some music is a cultural and political statement. We have a strong separation between people who consume (or they think they consume) high culture and other people who consume pop culture. These groups don't like each other and have strong arguments about why they are correct and another group is wrong.

The rule of law is a huge problem in Serbia; otherwise, the absence of the rule of law is a huge problem. So it's not surprising that the law is one of the important themes.

Every day we have examples of breaking the law by high government officials, businessmen, etc. So, insisting on the rule of law, in this case, regulating reality shows, is something that opposition politicians and members of NGOs want.

8.6 Discussion and conclusion

Serbia is a deeply divided country between, put simply, people who honor tradition and people who oppose it. Tradition is not just an honoring of the past and our ancestors. Tradition is a whole set of opinions and statements like worshiping war criminals, enjoying turbo-folk music, glorifying the history of Serbia, etc. People with this traditional set of values are often categorized as "The first Serbia," and those who oppose them are labelled as "The other Serbia." This separation is visible in Serbian society, politics, science, art, culture, music, etc. But something seems to have the power to unify these two groups, which is real and shows. Most prominent figures of these two groups are against reality shows but for different reasons. First Serbia is against reality shows because they think this kind of program ruins family, religion, and traditional values, promoting lousy role models for our children. Other Serbia is against reality programs because they think these programs promote values of first Serbia, such as kitsch, domestic violence, toxic masculinity, barbarism, turbo-folk music, authoritarianism, etc. On top of that, reality shows in Serbia are broadcasted by popular tv channels that also spread the propaganda of the Serbian ruling party, and the majority of other Serbia are in opposition.

Although both groups are against reality shows, only the members of the liberal part of Serbian citizens decided to do something about reality shows. We have a strong internet campaign followed by gathering signatures for the petition, which should result in banning or at least regulating reality shows in Serbia.

As we see in the data above, reality shows are not just a matter of culture but also politics. People see the problem of reality shows as a political problem, and the dominant discourse about why the reality programs are not banned yet is because the Serbian ruling party uses the reality shows to anesthetize

the citizens, to deprive their sense of morality so the government can do whatever they want.

Authoritarianism, the rule of law, and the absence of good artistic and cultural content are, among others, significant problems for Serbia in the future.

9. Findings for Spain: Bono Cultural Joven

9.1. Background

In the case of the Spanish team, the objective of the analysis was to delve into the recent implementation of the *Bono Cultural Joven* (Youth Culture Voucher). This measure is a new cultural policy aimed at encouraging young people's cultural participation. It also aims to rebuild the cultural sector after the COVID-19 period. Specifically, according to the government, the Bono Cultural Joven project seeks to facilitate universal and diversified access to culture for young people, generate new cultural consumption habits and strengthen existing ones, create new audiences, stimulate demand and reduce the negative impact caused by the pandemic in the various cultural sectors in our country. In short, to promote cultural loyalty that generates the habit of consuming cultural products in young people so that, as adults, they continue to consume cultural products with assiduity.¹⁸

More precisely, the Bono Cultural Joven is a grant of 400 euros to those who turn 18 during the year 2022 and have Spanish nationality or legal residence in Spain for the acquisition and enjoyment of cultural products and activities under certain conditions:

- To buy tickets and season tickets for performing arts, live music, cinema, museums, Spanish historical heritage, libraries, exhibitions and performing, literary, musical or audio-visual festivals, up to a maximum of 200 euros per beneficiary.
- To buy cultural products in physical support up to 100 euros (books; periodical publications; video games, music in different formats and supports).
- To subscribe to digital or online platforms up to 100 euros (subscriptions and rentals to music platforms, subscriptions to video games in the cloud or online, digital subscriptions to newspapers, magazines or other periodicals, among others).

However, there are limitations on certain products that are not eligible for subsidies, such as stationery products; curricular textbooks, equipment, software, hardware and computer and electronic consumables; musical instruments; sports and bullfighting shows; fashion and gastronomy or pornographic products.

The measures and regulatory rules of the Bono Cultural Joven were established in March 2022. Initially, the deadline for applying for the Bono Cultural Joven 2022 was from the end of July to mid-October, and the means of submission of the application was mandatory by electronic means. However, due to multiple problems with the application¹⁹, the government introduced some changes to the application process, and the deadline was extended until the end of October.

This report examines the discourse around the Bono cultural Joven on social networks, specifically on

¹⁸ Royal Decree 210/2022, of March 22, which establishes the rules governing the Bono Cultural Joven.

¹⁹ Larrañeta, A. (2022). Web caída, caos en la autofirma, retrasos... Los jóvenes se dan de bruces con la solicitud del bono cultural: "Me saca de quicio". *20 minutos*.
<https://www.20minutos.es/noticia/5042090/0/caidas-de-la-web-caos-en-la-autofirma-los-jovenes-se-dan-de-bruces-en-la-solicitud-del-bono-cultural-me-saca-de-quicio/>[Web down, chaos in self-signing, delays... Young people are faced with the application for the cultural voucher: "It drives me crazy"]

Cabrera, E. (2022). Conseguir el Bono Cultural Joven: "Las doce pruebas de Heracles y de Astérix juntas". *Eldiario.es*. https://www.eldiario.es/cultura/bono-cultural-joven-doce-pruebas-heracles-asterix-juntas_1_9220542.html. [Get the Youth Cultural Voucher: "The Twelve Trials of Heracles and Asterix Together"]

Twitter and Reddit. To this end, firstly, the topic modelling results are presented, and secondly, a more qualitative approach is carried out with a thematic analysis in which the primary social values of culture are identified.

9.2. Data description

The comments analysed in the Spanish case are collected from two social networks, Twitter and Reddit. The aim of scraping data from different platforms was to examine the diversity of user profiles and to introduce potential comparative elements between the social discourses of the media platforms. The data extraction was carried out using R and the scripts created by Ossi Sirkka for this purpose²⁰.

The total number of comments scraped was 42,451, with the majority coming from Twitter (n=42,155). Despite Reddit's low popularity in Spain, 296 posts were scraped, which included comments related to the "Bono Cultura Joven".

Table ES - 1 – Summary of data gathered in the Spanish Case Study

Source	N comments
Twitter	42155
Reddit	296
Total	42451

9.3. Descriptive analysis

Once all comments were extracted from the two platforms, a data-cleaning process was carried out to eliminate irrelevant and redundant comments. Once this process was completed, Table ES - 2 shows the most frequently used words. By analysing these words, it is possible to preliminarily identify which will be the most discussed topics in the comments. For instance, the first two most frequently used words, "Euro" and "Money" may be related to the monetary aspects of the *Bono Cultural Joven*, which provides financial aid of 400 euros to each young person. On the other hand, some words associated with specific cultural consumption products, services or practices, such as "Videogame" or "Book", are also in the table. At the same time, other words, as will be seen below, are related to the political management of the voucher, with words such as "Vote" and "Government" reflecting this political dimension. Finally, words such as "Information" and "Digital" were among the most frequently used words in the comments and may be related to young people's difficulties when applying for the voucher digitally.

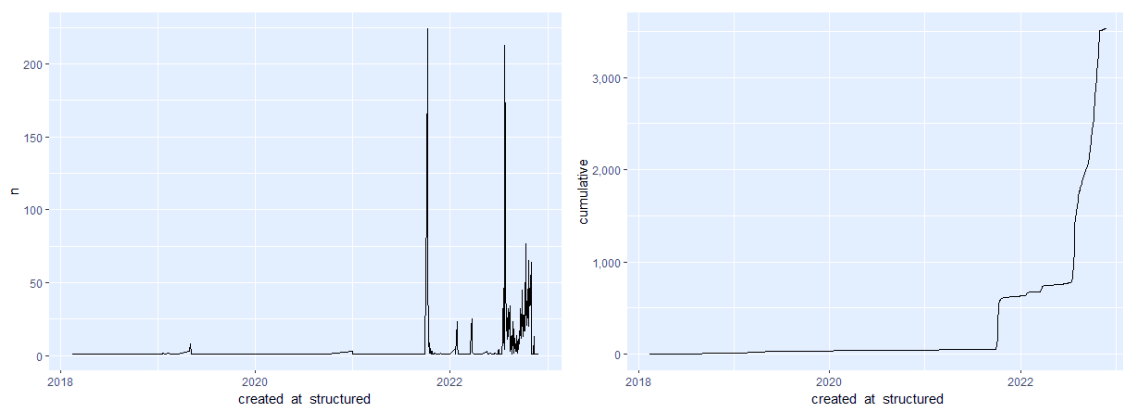
²⁰ see methodological section for more details.

Table ES - 2 - Ten most-used words in comments

Word [Spanish]	Frequency
Euro [Euro]	353
Money [Dinero]	279
Digital [Digital]	268
Vote [Voto]	238
Government [Gobierno]	206
Videogame [Videojuego]	189
Book [Libro]	183
Funny [Gracia]	174
Child [Hij@]	154
Information [Información]	151

Mentions of the *Bono Cultural Joven* on social networks have specific peak moments, as illustrated in Figures ES - 1 - 2. Essentially, the highest peak moments coincide with two special events: first, with the announcement of the Bono Cultural Joven by the President of the Government at the end of 2021, when it was introduced, and some of its characteristics were presented. This announcement sparked some doubts about the application and coverage of the voucher among specific sectors, which provoked many comments (e.g., groups advocating for bullfighting). Second, the second prominent peak of comments coincides with the start of the application process by young people and the first allocation of the voucher. This process took place in mid-2022 and continued until the end of October of the same year.

Figures ES - 1 - 2 - Number of comments per day and cumulative in the analysed period



The predominance of Twitter as a source is reflected in the average length of the messages analysed. The

logic of short and direct messages that have traditionally characterized Twitter messages is evident when analysing the average number of words in the comments analysed. With an average of 8.56 words per tweet (median = 8.00), many of the comments consist of one or two short sentences and direct messages.

Table ES - 3 - Descriptive analysis of comments' length

Label	Value
Mean characters	66.54
Mean words	8.56
Median characters	63.00
Median words	8.0

9.4. Topic modelling

Through the topic modelling analysis, different topics associated with the Bono Cultural Joven emerged around which Twitter and Reddit users commented. From the values of exclusivity and semantic coherence related to each topic, it was determined that the number of topics that offered the best trade-off was 6. Three of the topics engage in debates about cultural hierarchies and boundaries. In this category, we can find comments and discussions about video games as a cultural activity and practice (Topic 5: Video games), about the cultural conception of bullfighting (Topic 3: Bullfighting), or simply comments about the type of cultural products and activities of young people (Topic 4: Products).

On the other hand, other issues emerge of a political nature. In particular, there are comments, debates and especially criticisms directed at the design and management of the Bono Cultural Joven by the government and political parties. In this sense, we can identify criticisms about the design of the aid implemented and about the redistribution of wealth (Theme 6: Taxes | Truth). Another exciting issue revolves around the voucher recipients and the fact that the measure is aimed exclusively at young people (Theme 2: People). Finally, there are also topics related to technical problems in applying for the Bonus. The technical difficulties that young people encountered when applying for the voucher digitally generated a significant number of comments and criticisms (topic 1: App-shame).

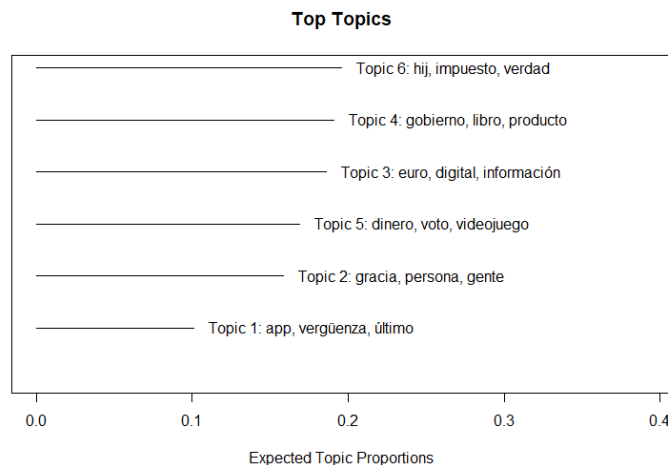
Table ES - 4 - Topic modelling results

Topic 1: App - shame		Topic 2: People		Topic 3: Bullfighting	
Spanish	English	Spanish	English	Spanish	English
App	App	Gracia	Funny	Toro	Bull
Vergüenza	Shame	Persona	Persona	Sector	Sector
PSOE	PSOE	Gente	People	Información	Information
Dinero	Money	Chaval	Kid	Empresa	Company
Gente	People	Claro	Clear	Euro	Euro
Topic 4: Products		Topic 5: Videogame		Topic 6: Tax Truth	
Spanish	English	Spanish	English	Spanish	English
Gobierno	Government	Videojuego	Video game	Impuesto	Tax
Productos	Products	Dinero	Money	Verdad	Truth

Topic 1: App - shame		Topic 2: People		Topic 3: Bullfighting	
Libro	Book	Voto	Vote	Hijo	Son
España	Spain	Compra	Buy	Contar	Count
Arte	Art	País	Country	Idea	Idea

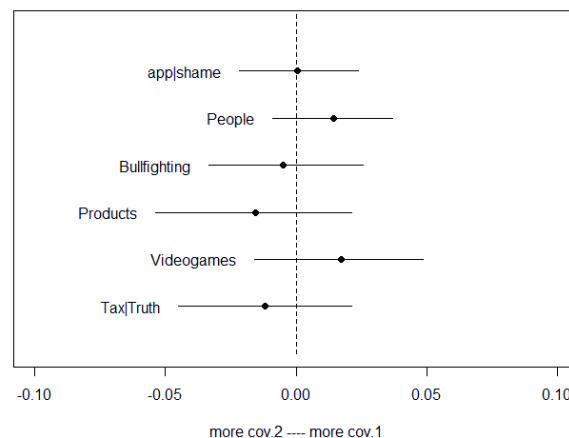
The topic related to technical difficulties in the application process (Topic 1 = app|shame) is the least present in the comments as can be seen in Figure ES - 3. In contrast, three themes are the most discussed and have almost the same relative weight: political and distributive policy debates (Topic 6: Tax|Truth), debates on the cultural conception of bullfighting (Topic 3: Bullfighting) and the type of consumption of cultural products (Topic 4: Products). These three topics are followed by debates on the cultural dimension of video games (Topic 5: Videogames) and comments on granting the voucher to a specific group of young people (Topic 2: People).

Figure ES - 3 - Top topics



Another interesting analysis is to explore whether there is a relationship between the different topics identified and the social networks analysed. The following graph shows the six topics according to their association with the two sources, either Twitter (cov.2) or Reddit (cov.1). As we can see, there are no major differences in the presence of topics by platform. Specifically, no differences are observed between the technical difficulties encountered by the young people in the application process (Topic 1: app|shame). On the other hand, Reddit seems to include more comment posts related to topics more associated with younger people, such as video games (Topic 5: video games) and debates about the people targeted by the Bono Cultural (Topic 2: people). Twitter (cov.2), on the other hand, includes more comments related to discussions about political issues (Topic 6: Taxes|Truth) and debates about the type of products and services included in the Bono Cultural Joven (Topic 4: Products) and, among these activities, the debate about the non-inclusion of bullfighting (Topic 3: Bullfighting) also stands out. It should be noted that the difference in the presence of one or the other topic is minimal between the two sources.

Figure ES - 4 - Top according to sources



9.5. Thematic analysis

Once the main topics had been defined and characterised, the most significant comments on each topic were selected. The analysis of these comments allowed us to identify and deepen the patterns of the meaning of each topic based on a thematic analysis. Although the number of comments analysed varies depending on the topic, around 70 comments were analysed for each topic. Three major themes related to different social values resulting from the thematic analysis can be identified: 1. Discomfort, political tension and suspicion, 2. Cultural hierarchies and symbolic boundaries, and 3. Social distance and intergenerational tolerance and solidarity. To exemplify these issues, the most significant and representative comments have been incorporated and transcribed throughout the text.

Discomfort, political tension and suspicion

One of the main features of the implementation of the new Bono Cultural Joven policy was the problems experienced during the application process. Many problems were encountered both in the application platform and in the identification process or the collapse due to the surge of connections to the website²¹. This resulted in many people who had completed the online process not knowing if they had been granted the voucher. Faced with this situation, many young people and their families expressed messages of complaint and dissatisfaction through social networks. In particular, many comments show a certain feeling of disengagement and an unpleasant experience.

I applied on 4 August, and I still don't know anything about it, and no one has solved my problem. Phantom voucher? Does it exist?

It is a disgrace how complicated you make it; there is no way I can get it out. All a deception.

Beyond these negative experiences at the individual level, many comments also shifted to social issues and, in particular, showed some distrust in the authenticity of the policy. In more extreme cases, and possibly due to frustration with the process, some comments accused the government of fraud and cheating.

²¹ Cabrera, E. (2022). Conseguir el Bono Cultural Joven: "Las doce pruebas de Heracles y de Astérix juntas". Eldiario.es. https://www.eldiario.es/cultura/bono-cultural-joven-doce-pruebas-heracles-asterix-juntas_1_9220542.html. [Get the Youth Cultural Voucher: "The Twelve Trials of Heracles and Asterix Together"]

I have been doing it for the same amount of time, I would like to think that they are taking a long time because of the collapse of requests or because they will give it when the deadline is over, but I think that they will not give it and then they will act cool and they will be very good because they give us money.

I've called, left complaints, sent emails but you don't answer any of them... this is a fucking scam.

If you send the party card, they will do it much faster. My niece has already been admitted because she has a friend in the PSOE [political party].

Another element that generated a lot of political criticism and discomfort is related to the target population of the aid. Specifically, the fact that the cultural voucher is granted specifically and exclusively to young people who turned 18 in 2022 has led to accusations of electoral manipulation and vote buying. In this sense, many comments express dissatisfaction with the measure and, going further, accuse the government of undermining democracy.

[...] The forms are what disgust me the most because it is a direct monetary transfer, on behalf of a government, to a very specific population. And this population is not young people in general; but only those whose first contact with Spanish democracy is going to be in a very short period of time; it is a perverse and clearly anti-democratic measure.

When you are 19,20,21,22, etc, you are no longer young. It's only in buying the votes of those who never voted. So, Antonio, stop giving away money for votes.

Other political critics reject the measure because, they argue, it could encourage consumerism and could have a negative impact on public cultural facilities. From these positions, they propose the introduction of mechanisms for the revaluation of public services and facilities such as libraries or theatres, as well as subsidising these public facilities instead of direct financial aid to young people.

The value of live performances is undeniable; however, remember that loans in the network of public libraries, whose catalogues (books, CDs, DVDs, comics...) usually have a variety and a more than worthy collection, are free of charge. #BonoCultural

Books can be read in libraries, which are free. These young people are not book lovers, unfortunately. And I ask myself, why do I have to pay with my taxes for video games for a little boy from a family with resources? Let his parents buy them for him!

And why don't you invest that money in increasing the stock of books, magazines and comics in the libraries of the Community? That way, the money invested will remain resources for all Aragon's citizens.

Thus, what was supposed to be a policy to promote access to culture among young people generated frustration and unease due to bureaucratic and technical difficulties in management and communication. This gave rise to discourses of distrust and suspicion of the government and the integrity of the policy. These experiences were also reflected in many newspaper articles explaining the experiences and grievances of young people with the whole process. The headline of this article neatly sums up the experience of some of these young people: "Bono Cultural Joven: chronology of a good initiative weighed down by poor communication and impracticality"²².

²² García Higuera, Laura (2023). "Bono Cultural Joven: cronología de una buena iniciativa lastrada por la mala comunicación y poca practicidad". Eldiario.es.
https://www.eldiario.es/cultura/politicas_culturales/bono-cultural-joven-cronologia-buena-iniciativa-

Cultural Hierarchies and symbolic boundaries

One of the significant topics common to different topics is associated with cultural hierarchies and symbolic boundaries. In this sense, the design of the voucher, which limits consumption to particular cultural practices and services, posed a debate about the divergent meanings and evaluations concerning conceptions of culture. Specifically, the analyzed data show that the Bono Cultural Joven puts in the foreground positions regarding two specific practices not seen as cultural practices by certain social groups: video games and bullfighting. These practices represent both emergent and traditional concepts and cultural practices and reveal fractures or gaps between different generations.

When it comes to bullfighting, the positions are clear. On the one hand, those who defend bulls and bullfighting view it as a traditional cultural activity deeply embedded in Spanish culture, which has endured for centuries. From this perspective, bullfighting fans feel aggrieved as the Youth Cultural Bonus does not include bullfighting as a subsidized cultural activity.

Today we are going to the bullfights with... the thousands of young people from all over Spain who every year go to the bullfights and today have been discriminated against by those who want to leave bullfighting out of the #BonoCultural #TodosALosToros

On the other hand, many voices express their vehement opposition to bullfighting, citing animal abuse as the primary reason for their rejection. This sentiment is shared by the majority, who view bullfighting as a violent practice only supported by a small minority of social groups. Furthermore, they argue that it cannot be considered either art or culture.

Bullfighting is neither #culture nor #art... and yes, it is dying out, not for lack of support, but because people finally see what an aberration it is. It's a pity that the #BonoCultural has gone viral because of the protest of four cats.

"Bullfighting, "neither art nor culture". Violence in its purest form. No #BonoCultural should cover this aberration. #TauromaquiaAbolicion.

Culture serves to form us as people, and just as we show our repulsion against machismo, homophobia, and racism, we have to show it against animal abuse, that's why the state can never subsidise bullfighting. #BonoCultural

Unlike bullfighting, other emerging practices have generated great controversy, provoking opposing positions of resistance or acceptance. This is especially true in the case of video games, which have become widespread and accepted among younger generations. In this sense, some have argued that video games should be seen as a cultural practice, citing their potential benefits on an individual level.

Video games are culture the same way as other genres such as cinema or music because some of their values contribute to people's development. However, either you have played few games, or you haven't chosen the right ones.

Well, video games are more culture than books nowadays, I can tell you this because my history teacher used to make us watch videos of AC [Assassin's Creed] before making us read the theory and as a fan of mythology GoW [God of War] teaches us much more than thousands of books.

On the other hand, video games are often viewed from an opposing perspective as a mere form of

lastrada-mala-comunicacion-practicidad_1_9868420.html [Bono Cultural Joven: chronology of a good initiative weighed down by poor communication and impracticality]

leisure, lacking any social, educational, or cultural benefit. Those who oppose the idea of video games as a cultural practice often cite the potential for addiction and the loss of time that could be spent on other activities as negative consequences for young people. This critical view of video games also draws a contrast between video games and more traditional, historically established cultural practices, such as reading a book or going to the theatre, thus distancing and rejecting the notion of video games as a cultural practice.

The fucking #BonoCultural would make sense if it were a card from which you could deduct the purchase of BOOKS, THEATRE TICKETS and MUSEUMS. Unfortunately, video games, clothes, consoles, alcohol, petrol for the motorbike and reggaeton concerts ARE NOT CULTURE.

What culture does a videogame have? Yes, it entertains, it's fun, it's addictive and it burns thousands of hours that could be spent reading or studying.

On the #CulturalBond I would clearly exclude video games. It's not that they are not culture; it's that they are the least threatened cultural (or entertainment) industry. Reading, theatre or other cultural expressions that need it should be promoted.

The fact that the Bono Cultural Joven was earmarked for certain cultural products and services highlighted in the comments on social networks different conceptions and symbolic limits around culture and certain cultural practices. Bullfighting and video games emerge as paradigmatic examples that can exemplify opposing notions and different ways of understanding culture. In the Spanish case, this opposition, in turn, reveals generational gaps in the way culture is approached and understood.

Social distance and intergenerational tolerance and solidarity

Finally, another issue that generated many messages and sparked heated debate was related to the criteria for granting the voucher. In particular, the universal nature of the measure -for those born in 2004- and the lack of consideration for other criteria such as income, social vulnerability, or indicators of access to culture, among others, were heavily criticized. These elements raised many comments, with some viewing the measure as an electoral and political strategy that could lead to increased social inequality and tensions between young people of different ages.

The senselessness of this aid... I mean that it is granted by year of birth as a birthday present and not taking into account income, which is the real cause of the lack of access to culture.

The #BonoCultural has two unforgivable errors. First, it does not target the people who need it most nor the most critical issue. So many will buy and sell video games to help their parents pay for electricity, and university fees...

People between 35 and 55 who work and have family responsibilities have the most significant barriers to access to culture.

In line with these assertions, many comments showed their opinion of the youth as a collective. In this sense, young people are seen as lazy, alienated, overprotected, and dependent on the state and the family. From these positions, they claim that the introduction of the Bono Cultural Joven will negatively affect the value of effort and meritocracy among young people.

And you have been given all the academic training chewed up, and you haven't had to make a shitty effort because it suits them that you are sheep of the flock with the critical capacity and thinking of an amoeba. What a generation of alienated

youngsters to buy for 400€.

Of course, it is, better a subsidised and dependent youth than a youth educated in effort and merit.

It is crucial for the new generations to get used to the culture of money that has fallen from the sky. Or of daddy state. Or of "the good guys".

On the other hand, there are also comments associated with discourses of intolerance towards young people and their forms of cultural or leisure consumption. These discourses tend to equate young people's practices with the consumption of alcohol, drugs, or gambling.

Approximately 200.000.000€ are going to be given away, to be spent on parties (alcohol and drugs, no doubt about it), video games, clothes, casinos... Surely this is the best investment that could be made, with the coming crisis.

Don't worry, kids, they'll pass your course without passing, they'll legalise cannabis, they'll protect you if you squat and they'll give you #BonoCultural for the botellón. Of course they do, better a subsidised and dependent youth than a youth educated in effort and merit.

Between "you approve by the face", "free money", we are going straight to generation Nini 2.1. Not to mention the economic deception they are putting into the country to win votes. Raise my electricity and taxes and give the child 400 €. The chickens that go in for the chickens that come out. #BonoCultural

9.6. Discussion and conclusions

This research aimed to analyze the implementation of the Bono Cultural Joven in Spain and to explore the primary discourses and debates raised in social networks. To achieve this goal, Twitter and Reddit comments were scraped, the main topics were identified, and the patterns of meaning were further explored through a thematic analysis. Additionally, the objective was to determine how these discourses on the Bono Cultural Joven related to social values associated with the megatrends of the INVENT project.

One of the megatrends that have significantly impacted the lifestyles of European citizens is digitalization. The introduction of information technologies into all spheres of life has shaped new forms of relationships in all spheres of social life. This new scenario has allowed greater active participation of citizens through social networks. On the other hand, it has also provided governments and political institutions the opportunity to communicate and implement new measures quickly, remotely and on a large scale. However, it is essential to note that mismanagement in the communication and implementation of these measures can have unintended consequences.

As occurred during the implementation of the Bono Cultural Joven, technical issues caused unease and mistrust among young people and their families, who actively participated through social networks to express their discomfort and dissatisfaction and request the government to make corrections. The changes introduced by the government, extending the application deadline and introducing new authentication procedures, may have been partly in response to pressure from citizens' messages on social networks.

On another level, the digitalisation process has also played a fundamental role in the emergence of new ways of understanding culture and in the formation of cultural consumption through digital forms. A clear example of an emerging cultural practice is video gaming, which is becoming increasingly popular and widespread among young people. It is worth noting that these emerging digital practices

generate, in turn, controversy and opposing opinions among the population based on age or generation. Consequently, among the younger generations, video games are increasingly seen as having a cultural, educational, and social dimension. This highlights intergenerational discrepancies in symbolic boundaries and conceptions of culture.

These differences may have consequences beyond the cultural realm, for instance, intergenerational relations. Additionally, the analysis of the implementation of the Bono Cultural Joven in Spain also revealed intolerance and discrimination towards the younger population: messages on social media displayed disrespectful and distrustful comments towards young people in general and their cultural practices in particular. Specifically, the messages depicted young people as a lazy, alienated, and overprotected group and associated their cultural consumption practices with drug and alcohol consumption or squatting, among others.

10. Findings for Switzerland: Cultural appropriation

10.1. Background

In April 2022, the German musician Ronja Maltzahn was supposed to play a concert at a Fridays-for-Future protest in Hannover (DE). A few days before the event, however, she was uninvited by the organizers due to her hairstyle: She, a white person, was wearing dreadlocks²³. A few months later, a similar event took place in Switzerland. Here, a concert of the reggae band “Lauwarm” was first interrupted and then cancelled because visitors felt uncomfortable about two of the white band members wearing dreadlocks²⁴.

In both cases, the problem was explained by referring to the concept of cultural appropriation. But what does this mean? Following the most common understanding of the term, the Encyclopaedia Britannica defines cultural appropriation as the practice of adopting “cultural elements of a minority group in an exploitative, disrespectful, or stereotypical way”²⁵. Thus, it was argued that these white musicians appropriated a hairstyle that is traditionally associated with Rastafari culture, which originates from a religious group of (black) Jamaicans. And since black people wearing dreadlocks are often discriminated against, while white people are not, this can be considered disrespectful.

Both these events were widely reported in the media and have thus started an intense public debate on cultural appropriation in all German-speaking countries. Various important aspects of culture were discussed in this debate. Most centrally, it was discussed whether cultural goods, symbols and practices can belong to specific groups and who is allowed to use these. Implicitly, however, many topics at a more general level were also discussed, such as the link between culture and identity, culture’s inherent value for society, or the economic value created by cultural goods²⁶. Finally, the debate has also spilled over into other issues. A prominent example is the status of the famous “Winnetou” stories written by Karl May: A publisher even decided to withdraw two books based on these stories due to issues with cultural appropriation²⁷.

Thanks to the importance of the topic and the strong public engagement, this seemed to be a good opportunity to analyze not only what experts and journalists think about the matter, but also what regular people think about it. This case study therefore analyzes tweets about cultural appropriation in German-speaking countries. To do so, it first uses computational methods (structural topic modeling) to identify different aspects of the public debate on twitter. Following this, it then also uses a qualitative approach (thematic analysis) to examine a limited number of tweets in more detail.

²³ <https://www.wn.de/muenster/fridays-for-future-dreadlocks-absage-hannover-munster-2547592>

²⁴ <https://www.swissinfo.ch/eng/how-a-white-swiss-reggae-band-forced-switzerland-to-question-cultural-appropriation/47789954>

²⁵ <https://www.britannica.com/story/what-is-cultural-appropriation>

²⁶ See for example: <https://www.nzz.ch/meinung/lauwarm-und-die-documenta-unterwegs-zu-einem-voelkischen-kulturverstaendnis-ld.1695607> or <https://www.republik.ch/2022/08/11/was-sie-wissen-sollten-wenn-kulturelle-aneignung-sie-aufregt>

²⁷ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/aug/23/german-publisher-ravensburger-verlag-pulls-winetou-books-racial-stereotyping-row>

10.2. Data description

Using the Twitter Academic API, all tweets (without re-tweets) were collected that contain the German term for cultural appropriation (“kulturelle Aneignung”) between January 1st, 2022 and November 29, 2023. This resulted in a total of 27’955 tweets. The timeframe was chosen because it covers not only the peak of the public debate, but also some significant amount of time before and after. Thus, one can compare how topics change over time and examine how the incidents described above affected the content of the public debate. Twitter was chosen as a data source because it provides easy access to a large amount of data and presumably best represents the public discourse in Switzerland of all available online platforms.

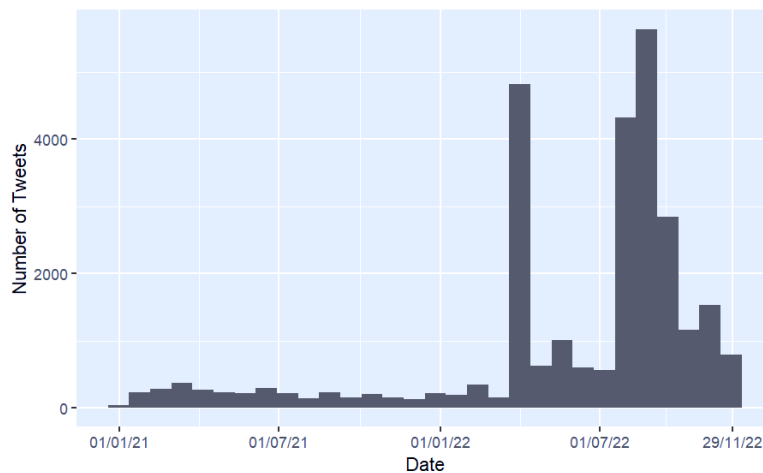
Following the data collection, various steps were taken to prepare the data for analysis. This included the removal of various stopwords, URLs, or punctuation as well as the lemmatization of all words that were left after initial data cleaning (see chapter on methods for details). Next, a document-term matrix was created, only using words that occur at least nine times in the whole dataset and only using tweets that consist of at least two of these words. Furthermore, several terms were deleted from the document-term matrix because they were considered uninformative for the identification of topics. This includes topic-specific terms such as “cultural” and “appropriation” but also general terms such as “indeed”, “really” etc. The resulting document-term-matrix thus comprises 15’488 documents and 1860 different terms. On average, each document contains 8.1 words.

10.3. Descriptive analysis

The public debate about cultural appropriation in German-speaking countries was closely tied to the two events mentioned in the introduction. This is clearly illustrated by the distribution over time of the tweets collected for this case study. Thus,

Figure CH - 1 clearly shows that cultural appropriation was not discussed much in German-speaking countries until April 2022. Then, suddenly, the number of tweets increased more than tenfold due to the cancellation of Ronja Maltzahn’s concert in April 2022. After this first peak, however, the number of tweets quickly decreased again. It was only in late July 2022 when cultural appropriation gained prominence again due to the cancelled “Lauwarm” concert and the number of related tweets increased again. In contrast to the first peak, however, the topic did not lose its momentum so quickly this time. Rather, it has built up over several months and has only decreased slowly thereafter. In fact, the number of tweets has not gone back to baseline levels until the end of November when the data was collected.

Figure CH - 1 - Number of tweets over time (total = 27’955)



After the data cleaning, the most frequent terms were examined as a first indicator of the content of these tweets. The 10 most frequent terms and their respective frequency are displayed in

Figure CH - 1. These terms already provide several interesting insights. Thus, the issue of cultural appropriation was frequently discussed in the context of identities based on skin colour. Thus, “white” and “black” were both among the three most frequent terms. This clearly points to the question of what groups a “culture” is associated with. The term “German” can therefore also be counted to this group. Further, several terms listed in Table CH - 1 clearly indicate a moral evaluation of cultural appropriation. This is the case for terms such as “good”, “racist”, or “racism”. Thus, cultural appropriation may be seen as racist by many commentators. More generally, this points to the fact that cultural issues are often also moral issues. Similarly, the term “woke” is typically used as a dismissive designation for moral and/or political views that argue in favour of social minorities. Thus, cultural appropriation can also be interpreted as a political issue.

Table CH - 1 - Top 10 most frequent terms (based on document-term matrix)

Keywords (original)	Keywords (english)	Frequency
Weiß	White	2116
Gut	Good	1091
Schwarz	Black	1011
Kultur	Culture	976
Deutsch	German	875
Rassistisch	Racist	622
Rassismus	Racism	567
Mensch	Human	559
Woke	Woke	556
Thema	Topic	522

10.4. Topic modelling

After the descriptive analyses, structural topic modelling was used to examine the different topics that are discussed in the tweets about cultural appropriation. The date of creation of tweets was thereby included as a covariate in the model estimation process, which means that the algorithm takes into account that the prevalence of topics may vary over time. Further, the optimal number of topics was determined by two complementary methods: On the one hand, computational methods were used to assess the semantic coherence and the exclusivity of various models with a topic number between $k=5$ and $k=15$. This analysis showed that a model with $k=7$ offers the best trade-off between the two measures. On the other hand, these models were also manually inspected by the researcher with regard to their semantic coherence. This, however, showed that none of the tested models achieve satisfactory results as all models produced mostly topics that were hard or even impossible to interpret meaningfully. This was also confirmed by examining the tweets that were most associated with these topics in different models. Thus, these tweets usually did not have a common topic even though they were supposed to according to the tested models. For this reason, the results for the model with $k=7$ is displayed as an example in Table CH - 2 but the topics identified by the model are not further interpreted.

Table CH - 2 - Topic modelling results

Topic 1	Topic 2	Topic 3	Topic 4
Schwarz ("black")	Mensch ("human")	Gut ("good")	Woke ("woke")
Begriff ("term")	Frau ("woman")	Problem ("problem")	Thema ("topic")
Person ("person")	Eigen ("own")	Neu ("new")	Richtig ("right")
Falsch ("wrong")	Wichtig ("important")	Musik ("music")	Fragen ("question")
Konzept ("concept")	Groß ("big")	Grün ("green")	Kartoffel (potato")
Meinung ("opinion")	Schön ("beautiful")	Blond ("blonde")	Form ("form")
Topic 5	Topic 6	Topic 7	
Haar ("hair")	Weiß ("white")	Deutsch ("German")	
Link ("link")	Kultur ("culture")	Rassismus ("racism")	
Artikel ("article")	Rassistisch ("racist")	Deutschland ("Germany")	
Dreadlock ("dreadlock")	Diskussion ("discussion")	Konzert ("concert")	
Mann ("man")	Frisur ("hairstyle")	Reggae ("Reggae")	

10.5. Thematic analysis

Since computational methods did not produce satisfactory results, more emphasis was laid on the qualitative part of the analysis. Thus, a thematic analysis was performed based on a total of 200 tweets. These were composed of the 25 tweets most associated to each of the topics displayed in Table CH - 2 and, in addition, 25 randomly selected tweets. The analysis revealed six major types of tweets, each of which will be presented with examples in the following²⁸. All examples are only provided in the English translation in order to ensure the anonymity of authors who did not give explicit consent to



²⁸ Categories are not mutually exclusive. Tweet can therefore fall into multiple categories at the same time.

participating in this study. Thus, it should be harder to find the cited tweets if they need to be translated back into German first as this introduces various ambiguities in word choice etc.

By far the most prevalent type of tweet that was identified was about **ridiculing the topic** of cultural appropriation. Thus, 87 of the 200 tweets included at least an element of ridicule. Most often, this was expressed by asking whether a certain common cultural practice or good falls under cultural appropriation. Frequently, this is accompanied by stating the intention of doing exactly what is (sarcastically) considered cultural appropriation. The following two examples illustrate these two aspects:

"If this continues, these woke people will probably soon forbid learning a foreign language as well. So, if this is not cultural appropriation, what is?!!!"

"When my husband came home tonight and said "Oh, there's Chinese!" I asked him if I was allowed to cook that at all or if this was already cultural appropriation?"

 Tomorrow I'll make Toast Hawaii, even if a German invented it!


As these types of tweets often use questions, it is sometimes not quite clear whether they ridicule the topic or if they ask **genuine questions**. At least 26 tweets in fact do. One user, for example, ask whether cultural appropriation "is not part of integration" and whether this "is not even beneficial" for both sides. Another user asks whether it might be considered cultural appropriation when "walk around in women's clothes pretending to be women". And yet another one asks, "How large are legitimate cultural spaces?". However, some questions could not be clearly categorized, such as one asking whether "blonde hair [is] cultural appropriation".

The second most prevalent type of tweet is one that makes an **argument**, usually in favour of or against the concept of cultural appropriation. However, no clear tendencies can be observed. In total, 47 tweets belong to this category. Three examples of this category are provided below:

"Cultural appropriation takes place in the museum, not at reggae concerts, at the Holi Festival or at the Wiesn [Oktoberfest]."

"What a load of rubbish. Without "cultural appropriation" there would be no Eminem. No Living Colour. Many more examples are possible. Just a completely meaningless debate. The real problem is called neo-colonialism and not "cultural appropriation"."

"Sometimes a hairstyle is just a hairstyle and not a cultural appropriation. It's not a disguise, it's not a wig, it's not belittling. It could also be seen as an appreciation of the culture."

Also quite frequently, one finds tweets that explicitly **insult people with a differing view**. In contrast to tweets making an argument, one finds a clear tendency here. Thus, 23 of 25 insulting tweets attack people who think that cultural appropriation is an important topic, and only 2 insults are directed the other way. Examples are:

"[It is claimed to be] cultural appropriation or some other left-wing neologism that morons cling to in order to get at least a little attention."

"The term "cultural appropriation" is completely antisocial, totally insane and should be banned. Discrimination is based on this thinking. Not by cultural appropriation! Whoever buckles before it is so pathetic. Ugh. How disgusting this country is becoming."

In contrast to these polarizing statements, some users also try to inform others using a more neutral way of communication. Thus, 16 tweets mainly include a **link to a source of information about the topic**. Another 11 tweets try to **explain the concept** of cultural appropriation without taking sides in the debate. The following examples show both these neutral types of tweets:

"I find this article on the subject of "cultural appropriation" worth reading: [link removed]"

"A very conclusive framing of the issue of whether or not white people can/should wear dreads. These explanations help me a lot to understand: [link removed]"

"Cultural appropriation refers to the adoption of cultural products of a minority by a dominant culture, which further reproduces the existing power asymmetry between them. That this image has nothing at all to do with the concert, you realize yourself, don't you?"

10.6. Discussion and conclusions

The analyses conducted for this case study produced several findings. First, they show that cultural appropriation is a topic that gained much public attention in 2022 due to two specific events that were heavily covered by the (traditional) media. Thus, the number of tweets about cultural appropriation increased dramatically after each of these events. Second, descriptive analyses (i.e. word counts) suggest that cultural appropriation is often discussed in the context of identities, moral evaluation, or political debate. Finally, the qualitative analyses revealed six different (non-exclusive) types of tweets about cultural appropriation: tweets ridiculing the topic, tweets including genuine questions, tweets making an argument, tweet insulting people with a differing view, tweets providing links to other information on the topic, and tweets trying to explain the concept of cultural appropriation.

Even though only a limited number of tweets was analysed, the relative frequency of these types of tweets may be informative as well. Thus, almost half of the examined tweets about cultural appropriation seem to ridicule the topic, and more than 10% include insults. Interestingly, most of the insulting tweets are written by people who think that cultural appropriation is a topic not worth discussing. In sum, the debate on twitter therefore seems to be largely dismissive of the topic.

Considering that dismissive tweets were observed much more often than tweets actually debating the topic or providing information on it, the results of this case study suggest that the online debate about cultural appropriation is in fact not so much a debate at all. Rather, people seem to use Twitter to express their opinion without wanting to engage in real dialogue. It would be interesting to test whether this also applies to other topics, or whether cultural appropriation is special in this regard.

Further, one also notices that many of the tweets examined in the qualitative part of the study are based on a somewhat incomplete or even wrong understanding of cultural appropriation. Thus, many of them ridicule the concept because – according to their understanding – a certain cultural practice is supposed to fall under it. However, many of these examples are typically not considered to be cases of cultural appropriation according to common definitions. This might illustrate a lack of knowledge about the topic in the broader population. Perhaps advocates of the concept would therefore be well advised to put more effort in explaining what the term in fact means.

Finally, this case study also illustrates the limited range of suitable applications for (computational) topic modeling. Thus, no satisfying results could be obtained using this method here. This might be caused either by the short document length of tweets (8.1 words on average) or by the narrow

thematic focus, which possibly did not allow for further categorization. Future research should therefore keep these limitations in mind when planning to use such methods for their analysis.

11. Findings for the UK: The case of the “Festival of Brexit” AKA “Unboxed”

11.1. Background

For the last phase of data scraping, the UK team decided to delve deeper into a topic which has consistently emerged in previous phases: **Brexit**. Brexit, a “nickname” given to the United Kingdom’s withdrawal from the European Union, has preoccupied the social media discourse in the UK since the referendum in 2016 and until today. For instance, in Phase II, which examined popular online petitions, Brexit was the concern of 12 petitions out of the 50 we examined. Therefore, for our third and last phase, in which we focused on a case study that is directly linked to cultural policy and the cultural sector, we chose one that is also related to Brexit: The 2022 “**Festival of Brexit**” (AKA “**Unboxed**”).

“Unboxed”, also known as the “Festival of Brexit”, is a national cultural event that took place between March and November 2022 across the UK. The festival is a resurrection of the 1951 “**Festival of Britain**” and meant to celebrate British culture and innovation. The current iteration of the festival was first announced in 2018, following the decision to leave the EU, thus gaining it its original name, “Festival of Brexit”. In light of backlash and critique of the name and the purpose of the event, the festival was later rebranded as “Unboxed: Creativity in the UK”.

The festival was constructed by a programme of ten major commissions that took place across England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, as well as on digital platforms. Taking place in more than a hundred venues and locations, the festival focused on bringing together innovations in STEM and the arts demonstrating British excellence. The festival was meant to open new job opportunities to young and talented individuals in the UK and to draw in tourists from all over the world²⁹.

Despite its rebranding, the festival was faced with a massive backlash and negative coverage in the media since its inception and for months after wrapping up³⁰. It was acknowledged as a political event and failed to get public support and attention. The politization of the festival, alongside its monumental budget (120 million pounds), brought the Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee to criticize the event and open an investigation on its potential misuse of public money³¹.

“Unboxed”/“Festival of Brexit” is a fascinating case study for INVENT’s third phase of data scraping. It is a suitable example of online discussions on cultural policy and the use of public money to fund cultural events. Through this case study we can learn about cultural values and trends such as globalization and nationalism.

In the following report we examine the discourse around the “Festival of Brexit” in social media and news media. We begin by presenting quantitative, descriptive data and the results of our topic modelling analysis. The topic modelling was helpful in choosing the comments we sampled for our qualitative analysis, which will be presented later in the report. We conclude the report by discussing the mega-trends and societal values that emerged in the analysis and our recommendations to policy

²⁹ <https://unboxed2022.uk/about-unboxed>

³⁰ <https://www.nme.com/news/music/government-urged-cancel-festival-of-brexit-use-funds-covid-19-recovery-2864307>; <https://www.theartnewspaper.com/2020/09/09/post-brexit-uk-festival-chief-seeks-countrys-brightest-talents-amid-criticism-over-pound120m-cost>; <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2021/10/21/dont-mention-b-word-brexit-taboo-festival-celebrate-britain/>

³¹ <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/brexit-festival-a-vague-waste-of-120m-vkbwc8h9v>

makers based on our findings.

11.2. Data description

The following report is based on data gathered from three platforms: the comments section in **The Guardian**'s website (a newspaper often associated with liberal and left-wing standpoint), the comments section of the **Daily Mail** (a newspaper often associated with right-wing, conservative perspective) and **Reddit**, a social media platform that is predominantly young and male dominated. The motivation to scrape data from these three sources was two-fold: first, we were eager to continue the taskforce's tradition of examining a new platform in each phase (Twitter in Phase I, and Facebook in Phase II). Therefore, scraping data from news websites and a social media platform that we have yet explored broadened our methodological skillset as well as provided perspectives and voices we have yet to explore. Second, we chose to focus on these three sources because they could offer a broader depiction of audiences' reaction to the Festival of Brexit: The Guardian could potentially offer a left-wing perspective, the Daily Mail – a right-wing one, and Reddit – that of younger individuals.

Data scraping took place in November 2022 with the aid of two tools. Comments from The Guardian and the Daily Mail were scraped via a Google Chrome extension called "Instant Data Scraper". This add-on is useful in scraping online data quickly, and without a script. Comments were scraped from articles posted in the two newspapers since 2019, until the day of the scraping (November 2022). Articles were found through an archive search in the two online outlets. Only articles that allowed and featured comments were scraped (the Guardian, for instance, does not enable comments in many of its articles). Reddit comments were scraped with R, with a script produced by Ossi Sirkka (see methodology chapter). Overall, 1,585 comments were retrieved from The Daily Mail, 1,724 through The Guardian and 418 from Reddit, leading to a total of **3,726** comments.

Table UK - 1 - Summary of data gathered in the UK's Case Study

Source	N comments
The Guardian	1,724
Daily Mail	1,585
Reddit	417
Total	3,726

11.3. Descriptive analysis

Since three different sources were scraped (leading to three different datasets), we merged them into one dataset. After cleaning the data (omitting words such as "the", "thing", etc), we were able to run a frequency analysis of the most used words in the comments in all three platforms. The following table includes the 10 most-used words and their frequency.

Unsurprisingly, the most-used word in the comments was **Brexit**. We argue that this is not only because of the festival's former name, but also because of the centrality of Brexit in the discourse revolving the production of the festival and its aims. Whether intentionally or not, the festival was used as either a punching bag for "Remainers" (those who voted in favor of remaining in the EU), or as a celebration for "Brexiters" who saw it as the first mark of the parting away from the rest of Europe. This kind of discourse is also hinted at by other frequent words such as **Country**, **Tory** (short for the conservative party and its voters), **Britain** and **Government**. Another interesting word, which will get more focus later in the report, is the word, **Money**. The second most-used word in the data reflects the scrutiny of

the use of taxes and public money in the organization of the festival (which reached 120 million pounds).

Table UK - 2 - Ten most-used words in comments

Word	Frequency
Brexit	832
Money	416
People	289
Country	256
Tory	197
Time	174
Event	164
Government	153
Good	143
Britain	131

After examining the most-used words in the entire dataset, we also produced several descriptive graphs regarding our data. Figure UK - 1 presents the number of comments posted per day throughout the years. Figure UK - 2 presents the cumulative number of documents through the dataset's time frame. We can see that the biggest spikes in discussions were before the festival in 2021, when the pandemic began to die down and Brexit was about to be executed. In 2022, we see another spike in conversations. These are related to media reports about the opening of an investigation regarding the festival's possible misuse of public money.

Figure UK - 1 - Number of comments per day

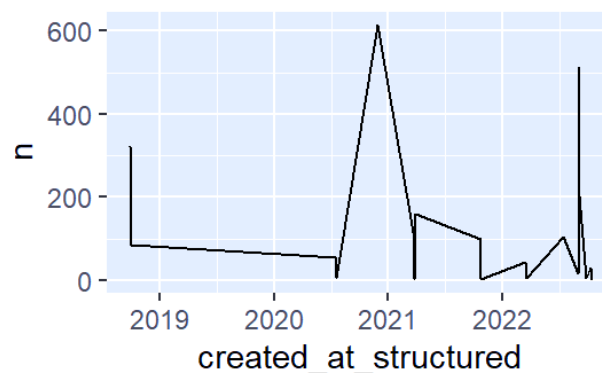
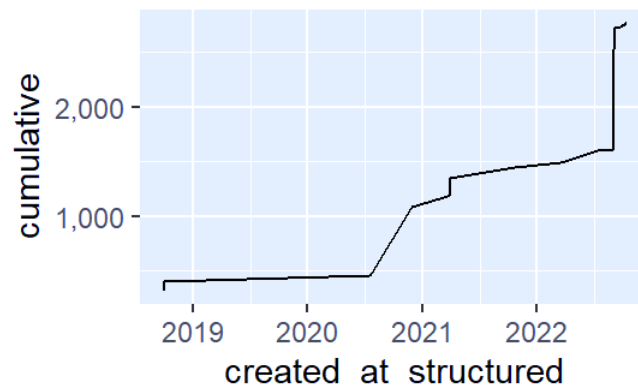


Figure UK - 2 - Cumulative number of comments through data set's time frame



Lastly, we ran descriptive analysis on the median and mean of words and characters used in the comments included in the full dataset. As could be seen in Table UK - 3, average words used in the comments was almost 10 words per comment (although the median is lower). Therefore, we could carefully suggest that the comments posted in the three platforms were more than mere expressions of like or dislike but consisted of details regarding the commenters' standpoint.

Table UK - 3 - Descriptive analysis of comments' length

Label	Value
Mean characters	66.87
Mean words	9.49
Median characters	45
Median words	7

11.4. Topic modelling

After our descriptive statistics, we delved into the topic modelling stage, which yielded eight topics. The title of topics, including five words associated with each of them are presented in Table UK - 4.

Table UK - 4 - Topic Modelling Results

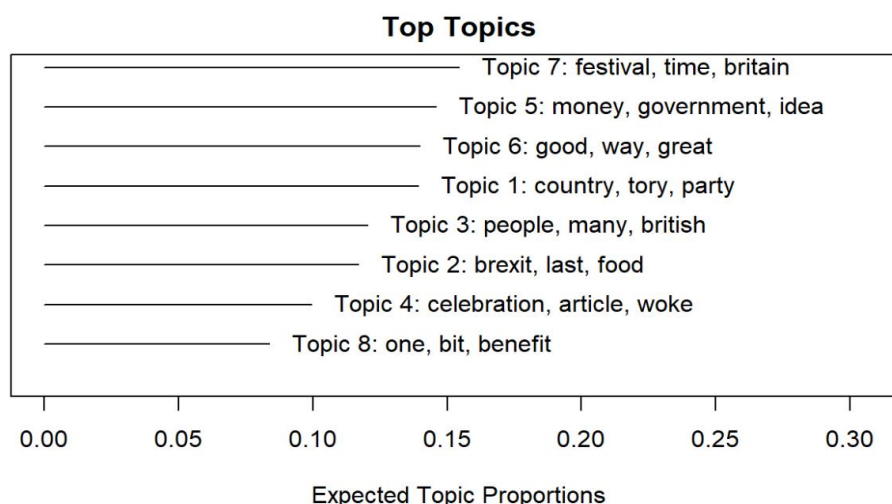
Topic 1: Tories	Topic 2: Brexit	Topic 3: Jobs	Topic 4: Purpose
Country	Brexit	People	Celebration
Tory	Disaster	Life	Woke
Party	Fiasco	Union	Culture
World	Food	Business	Business
Better	Last	Opportunity	Opportunity
Topic 5: Money	Topic 6: Arts	Topic 7: Nationalism	Topic 8: Benefits
Money	Good	Britain	Benefit
Waste	Art	Other	Remainer

Topic 1: Tories	Topic 2: Brexit	Topic 3: Jobs	Topic 4: Purpose
Tax	Public	National	Politicians
Taxpayers	Project	Nation	Expensive
Government	Great	Johnson	Failure

The topics found in the analysis represent the core conflicts that emerged in relation the festival. These included political rifts regarding the conservative party (**Topic 1: Tories**), Brexit (**Topic 2: Brexit**), and Nationalism (**Topic 7: Nationalism**). Another source of discord was economical (**Topic 5: Money**), in which commenters were critical of the use of public money to fund the festival and reflected on the ways in which the festival could provide new job opportunities (**Topic 3: Jobs**). Other topics of discussion revolved around the purpose and benefits of the festival (**Topic 4: Purpose** and **Topic 8: Benefits**), and the purpose and values of the arts in relation to the festival (**Topic 6: Arts**).

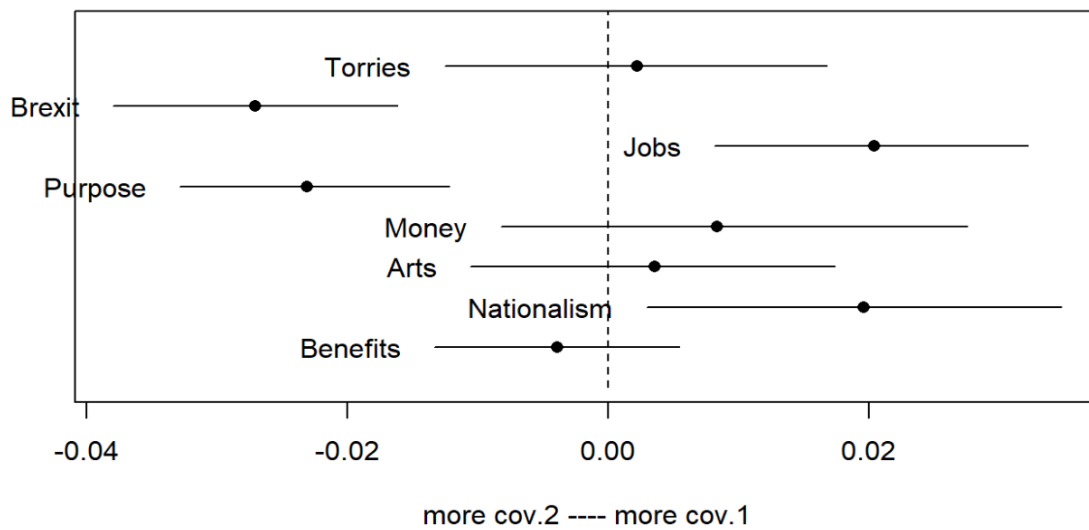
Based on a further analysis, we can see in the following figure that Topics 7 (Nationalism), 8 (Money), and 6 (Arts), were the topics that appeared in the data the most. The topic that was the least discussed was Topic 8, which included terms depicting the good outcomes of the festival.

Figure UK - 3 - Top topics



Lastly, we produced an analysis which presents the relationship between the topics and sources, i.e., which topics are related to which source. Since our data was based on three sources, with one source with a relatively smaller number of comments (Reddit), we compared between the Daily Mail and The Guardian only. Another reason to compare between these two sources is because they're taken from news outlets that hold polar political opposites. As Figure UK - 4 demonstrates, the Daily Mail (cov.1), included more comments which related to the topics of jobs (Topic 3) and Nationalism (Topic 7), and shared topics with The Guardian regarding money (Topic 5), the arts (Topic 6), Tories (Topic 1) and benefits (Topic 8). The Guardian's comments section (cov.2) was more associated with topics such as Brexit (Topic 2) and purpose (Topic 4).

Figure UK - 4 - Topic according to sources



11.5. Thematic analysis

After presenting our insights from the topic modelling, we delve deeper into the data via thematic analysis. The topic modelling was not only helpful in reflecting some of our findings, but also in choosing how to sample the comments for our qualitative analysis. Twenty comments per topic were chosen. These were joined by twenty more comments that were sampled randomly from the full dataset, leading to a total of **180 comments** that were analyzed.

The thematic analysis provided in-depth insights regarding **three main societal values** that emerged in the data: the value of money, the value of the arts, and the value of “unity” (unity is written in scare quotes, because commenters emphasized the country’s division). These themes will now be explained and include quotes from comments that were chosen due to their suitability to exemplify our findings. In order to provide anonymity to the commenters, who did not provide informed consent for being part of this study, we slightly changed the wording in the quotes. These modifications reflect the sentiment expressed in the original comment but also make it more difficult to trace back to the commenter via a Google search.

The value of money: the first societal value that was significant in the comments was the value of money. Despite its peripheral position in the overall INVENT research, money appeared as a major concern and topic of interest among commenters. Specifically, commenters were aggravated by the use of tax money, or public money, for causes they disagreed with. For instance, in relation to an article that explained that the festival would be funded by the government, a commenter posted: “Government-funded? More like, ‘taxpayer-funded’” In another comment, one reader argued: “As taxpayers, we need to have more of a say on what is done with our money. This is a joke” Such comments express the notion that the governments’ money belongs, in fact, to its citizens. Therefore, when projects are not negotiated with the public, citizens see it as a betrayal and a misuse of their hard-earned pay.

In particular, commenters argued that the money used to organize the festival, could be more useful if allocated elsewhere. A plethora of examples was given by the commenters: the NHS, schools, fuel,

electricity and more. For example, one commenter posted:

Do not use our money on stupid events like this. Many Brits are just trying to get by, and it's a slap in the face when money is used for this. The millions it will cost may be enjoyed by a few, but they could be spent on finding a cure for cancer or allocated to families in need.

Thus, as much as people were against the specific cause of the festival (a topic we will soon develop), many were also against the use of public funding for cultural projects in general. In their opinion, tax payers' money should be used for "life and death" causes, such as health or poverty. This argument is developed further in the next value, the value of the arts.

The value of the arts: the second value that was discussed, and was retaliated against, was the value of the arts. Following up on findings presented in the previous theme, commenters questioned the general use of public funding to support cultural events, arguing that the money should be spent differently. Commenters referred to events such as the Olympics, which might appear festive and glamorous, but in fact, drags countries into a deeper financial debt. In another example, a reader referred to a long-running event in London, claiming: *"When will we stop throwing millions at something only a few people enjoy when so many families are starving?"* Thus, one of the main arguments against the use of public funding to support the arts, was that it will not benefit society as a whole, but only a handful of individuals.

Another argument made against the festival's artistic value was its right-wing association, a standpoint that is usually not ascribed to the arts. With this notion, one commenter argued that the festival will not have a "real" artistic value:

A festival of Brexit was always going to be a mess. Proper, intellectual people would never celebrate xenophobia and isolation. Brexiteers don't do arts.

Similarly, other readers questioned how artists, who are perceived as sensitive, sophisticated thinkers (or, as one posted *"artists are all about creativity and freedom"*) would want to be associated with the festival. Readers perceived a right-wing festival as an event with low artistic value. Nevertheless, some understood artists' need to sustain themselves and their craft, but still referred to them as "sell-outs":

Artists can advocate all day, and then work with whoever pays them. After what the sector went through, they're following the money trail.

There were, however, commenters who attempted to look on the positive outcomes or benefits of the festival, regardless of its political roots:

I don't want to participate in it, but I'm kind of happy it exists. As someone who was appalled by its association with Brexit, it might have some good outcome eventually, especially when thinking about the complete destruction of the arts caused by the Tory government.

Some acknowledged artists' scarce opportunities to make proper living and share their craft and accepted that the festival was a platform for them to do so.

Thus, when discussing the arts, several values were reflected upon: the first was the economic value of funding the arts, an issue that was often criticized and retaliated against by the commenters. Second was the evaluation of the content of artistic offerings, wherein art or culture that are associated with a right-wing agenda was considered tainted and possessing a lesser intellectual value. Lastly, the value of the arts was discussed from the angle of the artists themselves, where commenters understood that

the arts is also an occupation that has to be financially sustainable.

The value of “unity”: the last societal value that emerged in the analysis is that of unity, where commenters mocked the idea that unity could be forced or synthesized, or as one of the commenters put it:

The last thing we need is another desperate front of unity to keep ourselves from realizing how damaged we are as a society, how conflicted we are as a country. It's like trying to save a bad relationship.

Indeed, many comments included different forms of backlash and venting: against Brexit, “woke” culture, Tories and more. Commenters found very little to celebrate in the current social, political and cultural climate:

*What is this festival supposed to celebrate exactly? That we can't work everywhere else in this continent? Or the fact that we are facing a political and economical turmoil? As someone born to an EU migrant and a Scotsman, I wish you could all f*** o**. I am not celebrating anything.*

Although “unity” is a positive value and a goal to aspire to, it is not a one that could be forced on a community. It is not a front that can be paraded in a cultural event, as demonstrated by readers’ reactions.

The purpose of the festival, and its explicit intention to elevate the country and promote unity and national pride made the rifts, conflicts, and discord among Brits all the more potent and discernible. Based on the toxicity and frustration expressed in the comments, it reached the opposite outcome from what it originally planned to do.

10.6. Discussion and conclusions

In the last section of this report, we tie our findings together to reflect on the research questions that we posed for the final phase of the taskforce: (1) the prevalent online discourses regarding the case; (2) the ways in which societal values and INVENT’s mega-trends are captured in the case study; (3) insights and recommendations to policy makers.

For the last phase of the data scraping taskforce, the UK chose The Festival of Brexit AKA Unboxed for its case study. Through this case, we were able to explore how commenters on the Daily Mail, The Guardian, and Reddit perceive and discuss issues of **globalization** and **inequality** (two of INVENT’s mega-trends) and societal values such as **money** and **unity**. With this study, we find that Brits examine culture and cultural policy through the lens of inequality. In particular, Brits are fast to criticize the use of public money to support artistic endeavours, arguing that the money could be better spent to support the sick and the poor. Moreover, Brits do not support politically charged cultural events, such as The Festival of Brexit. The festival of Brexit was used as a punching bag by commenters who wished to express their overall discontent with Brexit. Although terms such as globalization were not used by commenters, through commenting on the festival, readers discussed the UK’s separation from the rest of Europe and Brexit turning the UK into a less globalized, more bounded society.

As the qualitative analysis demonstrates, the societal values that were the most prominent were those of money, the arts and unity. Each of these values was controversial and contested, as commenters did not find the arts as an appropriate cause for public funding, while simultaneously perceiving it as a form of intellectual expression. Moreover, commenters did not believe that festivals, such as the

Festival of Brexit, could bring people together, and make them feel united and proud in their country. Instead, such festival made the social rifts more apparent.

Tying our insights together, we first ask to emphasize the importance of **transparency** when funding cultural events, venues and performers. It is perhaps the lack of communication between government and citizens that causes an overall rejection to the use of public funding for supporting and promoting culture. Moreover, perhaps more **advocacy** work is required to communicate the benefits of cultural engagement to the general public, including health benefits.

As found in this case study, unity, belonging and inclusion could not be forced or manufactured. These important social ties might be propelled through authentic engagement with cultural offerings, but not ones that inherently political and perceived as controversial.

12. Discussion and conclusion

12.1. General discussion

In this third and last phase of the data scraping, the INVENT members built on the findings from the second phase relating to online petitions and citizen initiatives with regard to cultural organizations, trends, and offerings in the different countries. We delved deeper into country-specific cases and explored topical discussions on cultural policies, mega-trends, and/or societal debates, aiming to provide a thorough understanding of different cultural questions that citizens in Europe are concerned with. These case studies provide a rich portrayal of national controversies about globalization, digitalization, diversity, and inequality, and the discussions surrounding them clarify which societal values of culture are perceived to be at stake.

In our methods, we combined quantitative approaches of data collection and systematization with qualitative thematic analyses and interpretation of our findings, which led to detailed insights into the way in which citizens in each country discussed the investigated topic. For the first time, and where appropriate, we also embraced the opportunity to take a closer look at relevant platform differences for these discourses; we assessed posts and comments on Facebook and Twitter, but also incorporated insights from news media websites, Reddit, and an online petition platform. This comparative approach allows for a comprehensive understanding of the role of different social media and public fora for specific debates and showcases to which extent they are suitable to provide an arena for cultural debates online.

In this data scraping phase, comparisons between countries were less central for our selection of the national case studies; nevertheless, we can observe several common themes that connect the online discussions in all nine countries (see also Table 1).

The value and meaning of culture - While some cases relate directly to cultural products (such as the debates surrounding the Bono Cultural Joven in Spain, or the controversies regarding reality TV shows in Serbia), others address culture in a broader sense and hint at larger societal divides (e.g., in Denmark, the Netherlands, or Switzerland). That also includes disagreements about what is – and is not or should not be – deemed ‘real’ or ‘appropriate’ culture in the eyes of the online public. For example, Spaniards differed in their opinions on whether or not purchases of video games should be subsidized by the state through the youth voucher, and UK citizens questioned the legitimacy of public investment into the ‘Unboxed’ festival, arguing that the money would be better spent on welfare. We observed similar discussions on what constitutes ‘valuable’ culture in Finland, Serbia, France, and Switzerland and these findings also connect well to the insights we gained from the comparative INVENT survey conducted in the Spring of 2021: A majority of 57.1% of respondents in all nine INVENT countries indicated that for them, video and computer games definitely do not belong to culture, and 48.3% (almost) never attended popular music events. It is hence not surprising that for many Europeans, the very term of culture itself becomes a reason for public dispute.

Tableau 1 - Overview of country case studies in the third data scraping phase

Country	Data basis	Topic	Mega-trends	Societal values
Croatia	Reddit ($n = 2,213$)	Tourism	Globalization Inequality	Wellbeing Social cohesion Life satisfaction
Denmark	Twitter ($n = 10,094$) Facebook ($n = 1,762$)	Digital governance and MitID	Digitalization Inequality	Social cohesion Solidarity
Finland	Twitter ($n = 1,337$) Online newspaper ($n = 1,005$)	Oodi library	Digitalization Inequality Diversity	Safety Social cohesion
France	Facebook ($n = 232$), Twitter ($n = 6,984$) Online petition platform ($n = 3,135$)	Removal of religious statues from public spaces	Diversity Inequality	Social cohesion
Netherlands	Twitter ($n = 58,712$)	Contested heritage	Diversity Inequality	Inclusion Social Cohesion
Serbia	Twitter ($n = 5,659$)	Reality TV shows	Inequality Diversity	Social cohesion Tolerance
Spain	Twitter ($n = 42,155$) Reddit ($n = 296$)	Youth culture voucher	Inequality Digitalization	Tolerance
Switzerland	Twitter ($n = 27,955$)	Cultural appropriation	Diversity	Tolerance
UK	Two online newspapers ($n = 1,724$; $n = 1,585$), Reddit ($n = 417$)	Festival of Brexit/'Unboxed'	Globalization Inequality	Tolerance Inclusion

Culture and the taxpayer – debates about the value and meaning of culture are directly link to another common theme we identified in many of this phase’s case studies, which relates to criticism of how (and which amount of) taxpayers’ money is spent or invested by the government. In Finland, this question culminated in mockery and complaints about the urban planning and mismanagement of Oodi’s main entrance and the resulting expenses for necessary renovations. Online users in Denmark ridiculed the government’s spending on the new MitID and the costs of the rebranding, and Croatians debated the value of money in an increasingly globalized world. Economic considerations also played a role in the UK and Spain, and it becomes ever more apparent that the perceived value of culture is intrinsically linked to – and cannot easily be separated from – monetary concerns. Again, the question arises what constitutes ‘good’ culture, and whether it should be subsidized accordingly.

The politicization of culture - along these lines, cultural debates are politicized in many INVENT countries: The case of the Swiss dispute on cultural appropriation exemplifies the degree to which political and cultural issues are entangled, and in France, the removal of religious statues conjured discussions on cancel culture and opened a forum for the far-right. Similarly, in the Netherlands, the government and monarchy were criticized for giving in to a ‘woke’ movement that led to canceling the use of the Golden Coach by the Dutch King on “Prinsjesdag”, a longstanding Dutch tradition. In Serbia, campaigns for the regulation of reality TV shows affect the political conflict between opposing groups, and Danish citizens accused their government of implementing a ‘totalitarian’ surveillance state. Nationalism played a role in the debates on the ‘Festival of Brexit’ in the UK as well, where citizens took offense in the political underpinnings of the event.

INVENT’s mega-trends - we further saw how mega-trends of globalization, digitalization, diversity, and inequality are either directly addressed or implied in many of the national debates. In Croatia, for example, the reliance on tourism has created both financial opportunities and challenges for many citizens and led to unequal conditions for visitors and residents. Similarly, many Spaniards felt excluded from cultural subsidiaries in the form of the youth voucher since these were only provided for a very specific age group. In Denmark, critical voices question the country’s advanced level of digitalization for Danes’ everyday life, especially for those parts of the population that may not be suitable equipped to keep pace with these developments (e.g., elderly people). Explicit discussions centred around the exclusion of certain societal groups were also observed in Finland – where many felt that the Oodi library should not provide a space for drug users or homeless people – and Switzerland, where it became common to insult people who hold a different point of view on cultural appropriation. These discussions highlight the lack of inclusion for many Europeans from certain cultural offerings or requirements, either because they are not eligible (e.g., in Spain), lack the necessary skills (e.g., Denmark), do not have the financial means (e.g., Croatia), are discriminated against (Switzerland) or simply because voices in the public discourse want them to be excluded (Finland).

12.2. Methodological reflections

The data for this phase were scraped in the last months of 2022, at a time when access to the social media platform Twitter was still possible through the company’s academic API. Current developments make it questionable to which degree (and indeed, whether at all) this will still be possible in the future. Increasingly restricted academic access to social media data makes it difficult for scholars to study and understand cultural debates in the digital sphere, yet we saw how important these platforms are for cultural deliberation on a large variety of topics. At the same time, we documented differences with

regard to how (often) social media were used for cultural discussions and reflected on the varying user bases of, e.g., Facebook, Twitter, and Reddit. When investigating the importance of culture online and from a bottom-up perspective, these sources of data are incredibly valuable for researchers.

In contrast to the previous data scraping phases in this project, we combined computational analyses of the most common topics in each case with qualitative thematic analyses to better understand which issues dominate the different discourses. In some countries, differentiating between areas of debate on the basis of the topic modelling alone proved to be difficult, and the qualitative analyses of individual posts helped in mapping these topics in an evaluative manner. But even in those instances where clear-cut topics could be identified through computational analyses, the close reading of a selected sample of texts provided added value to the interpretation.

12.3. Policy recommendations

The results of this phase highlight the importance of clear **communication** between governments and their citizens when it comes to cultural decision making. Specifically, politicians, policy makers, and governing agencies need to be open about processes related to cultural funding and should provide explanations for their reasoning. Along these lines, we encourage openness to recommendations from the public (e.g., in the form of petitions or public debates) and a focus on explanations and public accountability. If citizens have the impression that (financial) decisions relating to cultural and societal participation are made over their heads and in ignorance of public opinion, this may undermine their support or participation in the events or initiatives.

As our case studies reflect, **diversity, inclusion, equality, and national pride are not values that could be “forced” on citizens through cultural activities and initiatives**. As seen in the Festival of Brexit in the UK or in the cultural appropriation discourse in Switzerland, cultural events often operate on shaky, confrontational grounds. Despite the importance of starting a conversation through culture, our case studies demonstrate that cultural initiatives do not necessarily provide a solution for social discord. Therefore, there is a need for **collaborations** with other governmental offices and policy makers in sectors such as education, tourism, transport and health in order to reconcile tensions in Europe.

Lastly, we suggest that more effort should be dedicated to **communicating the importance of cultural practices** in general in each country. As our case studies demonstrated, citizens often question the purpose of funding different kinds of cultural endeavors in the country. There is a need, therefore, to expose citizens to data and information in regard to the positive outcomes of cultural participation in both individual and community levels in order to “persuade” individuals in the overall importance of culture.

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